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UNITY WITH FREEDOM?

THERE occurred in that speech of Hitler's at Munich which our bombers interrupted, a brief passage that went unreported in the daily press. In the German wireless version it ran as follows:

> In a few months Germany has in fact bestowed freedom on this Continent. The British attempt to Balkanise Europe—let British statesmen note this carefully—is ended and ruled out. England's aim was to disorganise Europe: Germany and Italy will organise it.

It is not the first time that Hitler has struck this note: he did it notably in a proclamation issued when he crossed the Dutch frontier. We have on the tips of our tongues our answer to these boasts. Hitler, if he should win this war, will certainly unify the continent by military power, but he will make its peoples helots under the German master-race. His economic plan is as clearly to exploit the peasants and primary producers of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, while Germany monopolises industry. This is a good polemical retort, but it does not sweep away the aspiration for unity. The sub-division of Europe into many dwarf States, each boasting an illusory sovereignty, is the curse of this Continent. It has retarded its economic development and loaded it with the burden of armies which failed at the test to stop the conqueror. A case can be made out on this score against the traditional policy of this island. Our ancestors broke up the unity that Napoleon nearly achieved. In the last war the victors "balkanised" Central and Eastern Europe, which the Germans had proposed to fuse in the loose economic union of "Mitteleuropa." We did, indeed, bring the fragments together again in the League of Nations, but it clung to the figment of absolute sovereignty and failed to achieve either a planned economic unity or collective security. Again we are resisting a brutal form of unification that would destroy the self-respect of every nation that submitted to it. But have we no alternative form of organisation acceptable to free men?

That is the first question which Mr. Churchill would have to answer if he attempted to define our war-aims. His difficulties are obvious. There has been no adequate discussion. The tentative suggestions that have come from Conservative quarters seem to us disappointing and inadequate. Mr. Amery, in a recent speech reported in the *Times* of November 14th, rejected anything in the nature of a federal union of Europe. He would be "content if the nations of Europe were prepared, while *abandoning none of their sovereign rights*, to follow our example of free co-operation and encourage among themselves some sense of a wider European patriotism." The negative part of this speech was clearer than its positive sketch. The creative impulse which led Mr. Churchill to offer common citizenship to the French seems to have exhausted itself in that bold improvisation. An able leading article in last Saturday's *Times* was almost wholly destructive. It rejected as chimerical any idea of a world-wide organisation. It then went on to demolish the conception of "continental blocs." These "bristle with practical difficulties." "Not the least of these is the peculiar configuration of the British Commonwealth of Nations." Because we can be neither wholly included in Europe nor wholly excluded from it, any idea of European unity must be rejected. In the end the *Times* left us, if we understand it correctly, facing the impossibility of any international organisation whatever. This is a somewhat reckless way of confirming Hitler's accusation that our policy is to "Balkanise" and "disorganise."

The answer to the anarchists of Printing House Square is surely that for some purposes the appropriate unit of organisation must be the world, and for others the continent. It is possible to advocate a system of collective security for Europe without incurring the absurd retort that Europe cannot be economically self-sufficient. It is possible to conceive a federated Europe as a unit within a much looser but world-wide economic and political structure. As we see it, mechanised warfare and especially the bombing plane, have made the little, isolated, sovereign national State an anachronism. Only a Great Power with a highly developed modern industry can be effectively independent. Modern technology has made of the continent the only possible political unit of the future—though the "continents" in question will not be precisely those of the geographical text-books. How then is unity to be conceived? The little States may retain a wholly illusory sovereignty and shelter as "guaranteed" allies under the wing of a Great Power. It will enjoy effective sovereignty but they will not. The other way is to aim at some form of federation,

which would own military power in common, and conduct its affairs by some system of representation that would give to each people within it a proportionate share in determining its policy. The problem certainly bristles with difficulties too numerous for discussion in this brief article. What dismays us is the evidence that the Conservative stress will be thrown so heavily on the side of sovereignty and against organisation. That has been our disastrous contribution to every war. We do our part in overthrowing the despot who aims at order and unity, and then in the name of liberty permit the Continent to relapse into the anarchy out of which yet another tyrant infallibly emerges. Is it possible to reconcile unity with freedom? Perhaps the question raises problems of social and economic as well as political change which our national spokesmen are unable to face.

How Not to Win Russia—

It is no surprise that King Boris should have been called to Berchtesgaden; for a march into Thrace, either by Bulgarian or German troops, would help the Italians against the Greeks. Yet another turn of the screw in Spain may account for Señor Suñer's visit. But why was King Leopold summoned to the presence? Presumably because Hitler thinks the time ripe to proclaim a New Order in which the heads of all the smaller states acknowledge his suzerainty. Perhaps more immediately important than all this are the hints that leak out concerning the results of M. Molotov's visit to Berlin. The Germans hope to transfer to Russian factories the manufacture of airplane parts, in order to escape the attentions of our bombers. It is probable, though not certain, that in return for permission to take Iran, the Russians may have agreed to put pressure on the Turks to remain non-belligerent. As a counter-bid to induce Stalin to refuse Hitler's blandishments Britain's recent offer must be described as unattractive. If Stalin had been polite he would have answered our overtures, but we are not surprised that he remained unimpressed. An assurance was given that this country will not join any combination in an attack on Russia. Then came an offer to recognise *de facto* her acquisition of the Baltic States, and to admit her as an equal for the purpose of regulating their status to the Peace Conference at the end of this war. If the first of these terms was reassuring, the two latter were calculated to put Russia on her guard. The Foreign Office in effect refuses *de jure* recognition, in order that its hands may be free at the Peace Conference to challenge the annexation of these States, should its power avail for this purpose. In the meanwhile, their gold reserves in London remain frozen. The methods by which Russia retook this territory are certainly open to criticism. So was Franco's conquest of Spain, yet Lord Halifax recognised it, both *de facto* and *de jure*, and the same recognition was given to the conquest of Abyssinia. The moral or legal scruples of the Foreign Office are obviously elastic. Unless we look forward to omnipotence in the near future, we must concentrate on our more important purposes. The Russians had probably decided to go to Berlin in any case; but there was nothing in this offer to persuade them to change their minds.

—And to Lose India

India remains unreconciled and until we win her, our moral standing in a war of liberation is open to question. This week the All-India Legislative Assembly rejected by a narrow majority the Finance Bill which imposed higher taxation for the prosecution of the war. To grasp the significance of this vote one must recollect that the Assembly rests on a narrow franchise and is packed with nominated members. The Congress Party is in a minority and must, in this division have had the support of other groups. The Muslim League abstained. This, then, is India's answer to our action in declaring her a belligerent without her consent. The vote was, doubtless, influenced by the exasperation caused by the savage sentence of four years' rigorous imprisonment on Jawaharlal Nehru. Mr. Gandhi has announced that a thousand distinguished volunteers are now ready to court imprisonment, among them the ex-Premiers of the eight provinces that had Congress ministries. The veteran Congress leader, Mr. Wallabhai Patel, was arrested this week. It is quite easy by an autocratic fiat of the Viceroy to impose all the taxes we need, and it is fatally easy to put the leaders of the majority in prison, but it is not easy with this background to keep up the pretence that India supports our war The maddening part of it is that with honest dealing we could have won her support, and might even now win it. Mr. Amery should release Nehru without haggling and without delay. If this were done in a generous way, it might so change the atmosphere in India, that a fresh effort might be made to reconcile her. That can be done if we really mean to grant self-determination. It cannot be done if our promises are weighted by conditions that give the puppet princes and Mr. Jinnah a veto over the will of the majority. There should be a large body of support for the protest of the India League which has called a meeting for Saturday 23rd at 2.15 p.m. in the Holborn Hall.

Dr. Negrin and the Mediterranean Policy

Mr. Butler could not deny that pressure had been put on Dr. Negrin to leave this country. He merely denied that he has been "obliged" to leave—which is obvious, since he has not left. Both Conservative and Labour leaders have suggested to Dr. Negrin that his presence embarrassed a Government which still hoped, through Sir Samuel Hoare's efforts in Spain, to keep Franco from falling into the Führer's clutches. This policy is intelligible from one point of view only; it is vital for the fleet, now operating in the Eastern Mediterranean, not to be troubled at this juncture by a threat to Gibraltar. But such considerations are irrelevant to the case of Dr. Negrin. We shall gain nothing now and we have lost immeasurably in the past by allowing Franco to blackmail us and make nonsense of our cause. Dr. Negrin should be a much-honoured guest in this country; sane policy would listen attentively to his advice.

Behind this affair of Dr. Negrin the House realised the implications of a Foreign Office effort to placate the Vichy Government as well as Franco. Our old friend, the Catholic-Latin bloc, appears again. De Gaulle is marooned in Equatorial Africa and hopes are entertained that Weygand will put up a French resistance to the Nazis in North Africa. German propaganda makes it clear that Spain, in Hitler's eyes, is a German and not an Italian colony, and Suñer is known to have been outraged by Ribbentrop's assumption that Spanish minerals belong to Germany. A similar Latin objection to Hitler's domination is to be deduced from the Vatican broadcast criticising the Nazis. These rifts in the Axis lute are all to the good; if they are exploited for a period by the British Foreign Office with a realisation that no trust in the long run can be put in any real resistance to Hitler from the Catholic-Latin bloc, then British manoeuvres make sense. If these manoeuvres mean that the same influences that gave Spain to the Axis are still under the old illusions and still dominant in our diplomacy, then they will merely assure a series of further disasters.

Mussolini's speech showed genuine embarrassment. The blow to his fleet was serious, and there seems to have been real demoralisation among some of the Italian troops on the Greek frontier. Probably Mussolini misjudged the Greeks as Stalin misjudged the Finns. Now, as the Italian war effort gathers force, the Greeks are discovering the dangerous power of the dive-bomber, and calling for the help of more aircraft from this country. There is no lack of will here; but the British air force is still greatly inferior in numbers to its opponents, and the number of aeroplanes sent must be decided by a balance of the risks here and in the Mediterranean.

Oil for Japan

Mr. Butler was placed in an unfortunate position on another issue. Last week he gave the House of Commons to understand that no agreement had been signed between the British and American oil companies in the Dutch East Indies and the Japanese. Unfortunately, he was mistaken. The agreement had been signed a few hours before his answer. Japan receives 1,800,000 tons of oil from the Dutch East Indies, which is about a million tons more than she has been receiving from that source, though it is also more than a million tons less than she had asked for. The Royal Dutch has the excuse that the American embargo on high octane oil (87 per cent. octane content) had been largely evaded by the American companies, which had been selling oil of 85 per cent. octane content to Japan What the world will notice, however, is that at a time when the Governments of Britain and the U.S.A. have publicly embraced China's cause, they permit oil companies over which they have control to supply Japan with the oil for the bombers which devastate Changking.

The Board of Trade and the War Effort

Captain Lyttleton has brought new vigour into the Board of Trade. Within one week new major—and welcome—departures in policy have been announced. Exports will not be encouraged unless they yield foreign exchange or are essential for the Empire and Allied countries unable to pay in foreign exchange. And the direct limitation of home supplies will be severely tightened up. In some commodities sales to retailers are cut to as low as one-quarter of the pre-war quantity. Both measures are in themselves excellent and should have been taken long ago. Exports are needed to pay for imports of essentials, and not to boost the statistical position. If they conflict with our war effort they might be positively harmful. We urgently need men and machines for increasing war production, and the absorption into the productive process of the unemployed or of women hitherto not employed is insufficient for the task before us. Consumers must go short of inessentials so as to free man power for vital production. The limitation of home supplies is therefore to be welcomed. But once more the insufficient or rather non-existing co-ordination, or even co-operation, between the Departments concerned with the economic sphere vitiates the full effectiveness of forward policies. If only exports are to be permitted which are harmonising with our war-effort, then measures ought to be taken that all exportable goods whose production does not conflict with the war effort (including the maintenance of essential civilian consumption) *should* be exported irrespective of sterling cost. Prices and exchange rates are too artificial to determine what should be exported. Conscious positive action is needed. Very much more serious will be the effects of the second order if it is not followed up by well co-ordinated positive action. The better-to-do have throughout the summer maintained their purchases. As production in most civilian lines has not kept at anything the same level stocks have been falling. The new cut in production will represent a sudden sharp fall in available supplies. The worst effects are, of course, mitigated by the concession that replacement of goods destroyed by bombing will be excluded from the quotas. But, as retailers and not consumers are being rationed, this will inevitably mean a rise in prices—if for no other reason because overhead costs in both production and distribution will rise. The efforts hitherto exerted to secure concentration of production are wholly insufficient under the new condition. The purchase tax will have the same effect. There is no doubt, moreover, that producers will maintain the supplies of higher class goods on which they can profit better. The effect of all these factors is ruinous to the small men, who could not anticipate events. It is, moreover, likely to be catastrophic to the small firms, who will not be able to maintain themselves. Appeals for voluntary co-operation on the part of consumers and producers are of no avail in these circumstances. The measure, necessary as it is, will be swept away by public indignation if it is not accompanied by a compulsory pooling and reorganisation of production so as to avoid an increase in costs and a wave of bankruptcies; if it is not followed up by a reorganisation of retraining and placing of labour; and finally if the equitable distribution of the scarce supplies available is not safeguarded by rationing. Indeed, purchases of restricted goods ought not to be permitted except on proving need. We shall have to travel even further on the road, squeezing the consumer so as to obtain men for the conduct of the war, we shall probably have to prohibit certain types of production altogether and introduce standard clothing and other essentials. But all these sacrifices are possible only if their incidence is just.

The Training of Labour (*from an Industrial Correspondent*)

I should feel quite elated if I were able to believe, with Mr. Ernest Bevin, that our war problems of economic organisation have been all but solved, and that within a few months we shall have definitely passed the German level of war output and be drawing steadily and rapidly ahead. How far this forecast is based on anticipations of the deliveries forthcoming from America I do not know; but I can see no warrant for such optimism about our own economic effort. It may be that training for war work is now really about to begin on a large scale; but I am not certain even of that—only that the large-scale plans now exist on paper, as they did not a few weeks ago. Even if we do now begin on a big training effort, it will take much more than six months to make up for past sins of omission. The less skilled workers simply cannot be rapidly trained; and such measures as the raising of the age of reservation for skilled printers will add to the difficulty, because printers are by far the best available reserve of highly skilled men whose craft knowledge can be rapidly adapted to war work of a high order. The training officials are, I believe, at last beginning to throw off their old illusion that training is mainly a matter of refitting the long unemployed for semi-skilled work, and are coming to recognise the need for adequate training allowances; and efforts to compel every considerable factory to introduce a training scheme on a satisfactory scale are beginning. But it will be a long time before these measures can produce their full effect; and a further doubt remains. We have the paper scheme; we can get the trainees, if the appropriate measures; but have we even now either the skilled instructors or the requisite machines on which to do the training? The whole business of training ought to be regarded as a big job, and put in charge of a big man, as it is in Germany. Mr. Bevin cannot look after it in his spare time, with the aid of a number of officials, each of whom is concerned only with a bit of the problem, and none of whom has the authority to tell a big armaments manufacturer, or a War Office magnate, or the head of an obstructive department, where he gets off.

* * *

As Professor Pigou wrote last week in a letter to the *Times*, the continuance of unemployment at a level of 800,000 is inexplicable on the assumption that we are really mobilising our industries for war. So is the situation in which it appears that the new drastic curtailment of civilian supplies (enforced on us by the Germans' successes against our merchant shipping) is certain to lead to a great deal of unemployment. Such things are possible only because we have insisted to a ridiculous extent on building new war factories in preference to making real efforts to adapt existing factories for war work, and thus use the available labour on the spot and avoid all the endless muddles over transport and housing of war workers in which we have allowed ourselves to become involved. Coventry ought never to have been allowed to grow to its present congested condition. It should have been an elementary principle (even apart from air-raid dangers) to scatter war orders roughly in proportion to available supplies of labour; and we are now paying a serious penalty for the idiocy which allowed war output to be developed almost entirely without a plan. It was sheerly idiotic to allow key factories to plant themselves practically where they pleased, no matter how much they were bound to get in one another's way. But it has taken the *Blitzkrieg* to get any conception of all this into the minds of the people in control; and now there are very great difficulties in amending what has been done amiss. Yet amend we must, even at the cost of a considerable *immediate* loss of output.

* * *

I hope our Labour Ministers realise how radically different the present problem is from that which faced them soon after they took office in the spring. Through the summer, the essential task was to turn out at top speed planes and other arms to replace our losses in France, and all more fundamental problems had to be postponed to that immediate necessity. But now we have crossed that bridge, and staved off the instant danger. Our problem now is to maximise our war output not so much during the next few weeks as in six months' or a year's, or even two years', time. This new task requires quite different methods. The great question now is not "Can we afford to disturb existing methods, however bad they may be?" but "What is the best method, with a view to a sustained and continuous increase of war output?" And the answer to this second question is that for purposes of long-term planning: (1) labour has to be treated as a pool, which can flow freely from factory to factory within an area; (2) machinery has to be pooled, so that machines in one factory do not stand idle while the factory next door is held up for lack of machines of the same specialised type; and (3) much more use has to be made of small establishments (under a plan which will get them really co-operating), and of factories convertible, even with a good deal of difficulty, to war work. What this means is that firms ought to be *taken over*, and not merely "controlled," and that socialisation, and not private enterprise, is the necessary basis of totalitarian economic war. Do our Labour Ministers yet see this, or understand that the methods which were *right* in the summer are *wrong now?*

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THE END OF A SYSTEM

THE overwhelming importance of President Roosevelt's victory for the immediate developments in international politics has tended to overlay its significance in the social and economic field. As the *Times* emphasised in its leader of November 13th, it was also a victory for the New Deal and when the smoke of battle has blown away, this may be revealed as its greatest significance. For it has definitely established the fact that 1929 was the end of an epoch. If Mr. Willkie had been returned, the ideals, if not every feature, of the New Deal would have been liquidated and the old gang, chastened but unrepentant, would have resumed sway. As someone has remarked, all that they have learned is not to put so much in writing. Mr. Pecora taught them that at Senate investigations into financial and corporation scandals. Hitler may have clinched Mr. Roosevelt's victory, but behind it was the determination of the majority of American people to opt for what Mr. Roosevelt now boldly calls the New Order. It is worth while summarising the developments of the last 20 years which have led to this thrice-affirmed decision. At the end of the last war General Smuts, in one of those fine phrases which statesmen love to coin and afterwards replace by inconvertible paper, declared that humanity had struck its tents and was on the march. The cynic might comment that it had wandered in a circle in the wilderness for 20 years and returned to its vomit. Even if we accept this caustic diagnosis the fact remains that people are again asking where do we go from here.

In 1919 the answer seemed clear, especially to the leaders. Back to the piping days of 1914. That is what Bonar Law meant by tranquillity and President Harding by normalcy. In the case of this country there is a grim pathos in the economic statistical tables of the first post-war decade with their stereotyped heading 1914 = 100. In the case of the U.S.A. there is a grim irony. If 1914 was equal to 100 then 1924 was 100 plus, 1934 would be 100 plus plus and the sky was the limit. On this side we were always looking for the removal of the last remaining obstacle in the way of a return to pre-war conditions, 1914 coal output, 1914 cotton exports, 1914 pig-iron production. Stabilise the mark, then the pound, the Belgian franc, the Italian lira, and finally the French franc! And all the time on the other side of the Atlantic untrammelled private enterprise was showing the example and setting the pace. The nineteenth century ended with a bang on Wall Street in October, 1929, and between that year and now there is no date line to which anyone wishes to return. You can't ask democracy to fight for 1932 or 1937 or 1938. You can't point to three million unemployed, to coffee holocausts and to dismantled shipyards and call that the democratic way of life. Nor can you point to the attempted solutions and argue that but for Hitler they would have succeeded. On the contrary, there is an uneasy suspicion that these very attempts may have produced Hitler. For what did we get in this country? In the first place, it must be emphasised that the pundits had no solution. The depression after 1929 disclosed a hole in economic doctrine which has not yet been filled. It is useless for economists to argue that their advice was ignored: they could not agree on that advice. It is useless for them to blame the crisis on State intervention, since from 1919 to 1929 the U.S.A. was the home of *laissez faire* and was big enough to be independent of European experiments. Even now after economists have re-examined and refashioned their doctrines from the basement upwards, the most level-headed of English economists can only sum up the result with the advice: "Let's have our booms and be decent to each other in the depressions." In the meantime the position had been captured by the Protectionists, who had been waiting their chance for fifty years. The tragedy was that just as the British people were in the most decent mood they had been in for centuries—and this was the case in the late 'twenties—when there was no trace of jingoism, but, on the contrary, a genuine and generous international outlook, the machine was captured by those cheapjack Imperialists, aptly described as the Brummagem gang of political souteneurs, who want to live on the immoral earnings of the Empire. Recall the circumstances of the 1931 election. Recall with amazement and derision the fact that the crisis turned on the proposed economy of about £20 Mn. per annum in unemployment benefit ("Be decent to each other in the depression! *op. cit.*) The people who argued that the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, yea, the great globe itself would dissolve if this economy were not effected, would now gladly bribe General Franco with two or three times that amount. But they got their tariffs and much good it has done us. Great Britain saved herself temporarily by worsening the situation for the rest of the world. By currency depreciation and tariffs we swung the terms of trade violently against the Belgian steel producer, the Dutch dairy farmer and the Danish bacon producer. That was our idea of a European order which we now have to live down. We tried to make the Empire a closed shop and by so doing threw away the best case for our Empire.

Let those who would now canonise the late Mr. Chamberlain take the trouble to re-read his speeches of 1932 and 1933. He was in his element when he slapped on duties of 50 per cent. He spoke his innermost thought when he boasted that he was at last able to accomplish his father's ambition. It did not matter that cheap Japanese rubber boots had done more to cure hookworm in Central Africa than all the applied medical science of 50 years. The Japanese were kept out by quotas imposed by Whitehall on the colonies without consultation. This taught the Japanese to drive the white man out of Asia. "Even if the whole world returned to free trade, we could not afford to do so," declared Mr. Chamberlain. The parochial stupidity of this is a measure of the man, and is it any wonder that the Brummagem gang, following a century of the Manchester School which they derided, brought the country to the verge of disaster in less than a decade? Along with their Protection came what can only be described as a bastard Socialism—the agricultural schemes, the transport boards and the piecemeal industrial planning, all run by producers for producers at the expense of the rest of the community. "The consumer has had his innings," said the *Times*, "it is time the producer had a chance." The producer took it by getting powers to burn coffee, close down shipyards, scrap spindles, hold up road transport development, restrict the output of copper, tin and rubber, and wherever possible to choke off any new enterprise in their respective fields. Thus we got State-fostered monopoly capitalism, the bastard Socialism which, precisely because it smacks of Socialism, has captured the sympathy of the Left. It has its specious appeal: it seems to have the merits of British compromise. No extreme individualism, no Communism, but a cautious experimentation in between. Well, we have paid for that, too. We could do with some of the dismantled shipyards now, we could do with a new steel works at Jarrow, we could do with those scrapped spindles, we could do with the thousands of motor coaches which would have come into being if the restrictive legislation prompted by the railways had never been passed. What appeal has this system to the young men now fighting? Are their future livelihoods to depend upon the good will of the controllers of these monopolies?

Must a young airman go cap in hand before a Commissioner to obtain leave to run an air service and find his application opposed not by the representatives of an organised scheme of state transport, but by expensively briefed railway counsel? Will he be forbidden to run a bus service, to grow hops, to start a cotton mill or a steel works because existing producers own the freehold of the industry by State grant? Even the *Times* has seen through this ramp. In the leader referred to above it admits that these policies were more and more designed to benefit the producer at the expense of the consumer and in any case were no radical cure for unemployment. This may be momentary disillusionment on the part of the *Times*, but it shows the bewilderment and confusion that still prevails on economic and social policy. At one moment the *Times* is out for the producer; a few years later for the consumer; at one moment (1931) the solution lies in a balanced Budget, a few years later (1938) to balance the Budget would be a crime. We recommend to the young student a thesis on post-war economic policy based solely on the vertiginous gyrations of *Times*' leaders. Let him study for example its Budget argument in 1931 and contrast it with the 1938 articles proving mathematically and logically that rearmament financed by a deficit would increase employment and restore prosperity.

The same confusion prevailed and still prevails in the U.S.A. The New Deal itself started off with experiments in bastard Socialism, producers' schemes designed as codes. The New Deal nearly foundered on its policy of killing off hogs and ploughing in cotton. It took up more foolish ideas and did more foolish things than were tried in this country. But the American people have twice endorsed the experiment, not because it has succeeded but because for all its muddle and confusion it stands, as the *Times* admits, for the little man as against the monstrous economic system which threatens to strangle him! Democracy is not going to fight for coffee-burning, for restriction and scrapping schemes, for holding company finance or any vested rackets. It is not going to stand 20 per cent. unemployment and impoverished old age. If Hitler ever gained any sympathy with the ordinary man in other countries it was because he pretended at first to be combatting these evils. Meanwhile, where do our leaders stand? In particular where do the Labour ministers stand? We ask this appropriate question because an appropriate question is a question that is appropriate. Have they any ideas beyond the sort of London Tran-

port solution? Is their Socialism merely the bastard Socialism of the 'thirties, a policy which merely keeps vested, and in many cases obsolete, interests alive? The capitalists will meet them more than half-way. It is the railway shareholders who now clamour for nationalisation since they know that the State must give them what is known as a "fair" return in perpetuity. The banks are quite indifferent to such a threat of nationalisation. They know they won't lose in the process, and the big executives will find a peaceful home on the Consolidated Fund. There are many captains of industry who would now like to be the Commissars of State-fostered monopolies with the same or larger incomes obtained free of risk. There is even a horrid suspicion that some Labour leaders could be flattered by the offer of such posts. Their function should be to use this situation, in which employers themselves realise the need of far-reaching change, for the benefit of the common man, who has been a mere pawn in all these manoeuvres of capitalism. They have in this war a unique opportunity. We have heard Tory Ministers admit the need of profound social change and ask why it is not now initiated by Labour. During this last summer the threat of invasion was an all-engrossing preoccupation. But Labour Ministers must not continue to plead the pressure of departmental business, however deeply immersed in it they may be. Does Mr. Bevin, in fact, ever meet Mr. Attlee and Mr. Greenwood to discuss the concerted measures needed in the transition to Socialism during the war?

BEHIND BARBED WIRE

THE emotional tension of midsummer, when invasion seemed imminent, left its permanent marks on our national structure. The good predominated and it survives: the evil in part has vanished. The Home Guard is still on duty, but the Silent Column was dissolved amid laughter. One ugly remnant of this period lingers on. Tens of thousands of German and Austrian refugees are still imprisoned behind barbed wire, because the authorities will not admit that they were infected with panic. At a first glance there was a plausible case for this measure of precaution. When Holland was invaded, it is notorious that thousands of German civilians sprang fully armed from their lairs to help the enemy's vanguard as it marched in. To ask whether the same thing might happen here was a natural and proper question. But the answer is in the negative. The Germans who helped the invasion of Holland were not political or racial refugees. They were, as the Home Office told Parliament, "tourists" recently imported to the number of about 300,000. Obviously there was no parallel here that would justify the wholesale internment of men who fled to our shores because they found life under Hitler intolerable. For more discriminating precautions there was, however, a case. The Gestapo may have sent out a few of its own creatures disguised with plausible credentials as refugees who would act as spies or *agents provocateurs*. But is wholesale internment the proper way to deal with such exceptional cases? Herod acted on this principle, yet the one individual he wanted escaped.

It is unnecessary to-day to describe the cruel and stupid muddle that resulted from this impulse of panic. The arrests were made with a total lack of consideration. The camps into which the men were flung were in the early weeks squalid improvisations. The misery of the victims was so acute that several sought escape by suicide. Among these men were hundreds who risked their lives to fight Hitler while His Majesty's Ministers were appeasing him. The reader will find many instances in the carefully documented little book on *The Internment of Aliens* by F. Lafitte, which has just been published in the Penguin series. Some of these men had worked underground in Germany as officials of illegal organisations: others had written hard-hitting books and several had fought against Nazis and Fascists in Spain. Statistics in this book (p. 77) give an accurate picture of the population of a typical camp. Of these men 30 per cent. had been in Nazi prisons or concentration camps, and 70 per cent. had been classified by the Tribunals as "refugees from Nazi oppression." The great majority (82 per cent.) were Jews. As many as 11 per cent. were seriously ill or crippled and 27 per cent. were over the age of 55. None the less, 87 per cent., that is to say, all the fit men, wished to volunteer for some form of national service.

Very slowly a beginning was made, under Parliamentary and public pressure, to clear up this scandal. Gradually the camps were rendered habitable. Under a score of categories large numbers of men, to a total of over four thousand, were released. These were chiefly the very old, the very young and the sick and infirm. Then came men of academic or artistic distinction, employers of British labour, and young students. The last to receive attention were those most entitled to our respect, the men who had actually struggled against Nazi tyranny. They could appeal under Clause 19 of the White Paper, a tightly drawn formula, which required proof of public opposition over a series of years. Only a conspicuous leader could furnish such proof, and only an exile could have conducted his opposition publicly. Even so, the procedure was excessively slow. After five or six months of imprisonment this clause has only begun to operate in the last two or three weeks, and so far as we can learn, very few men, perhaps a dozen or a score, have yet profited by it. In one instance a decision to release taken in August was carried out only in November. The tribunal which considers appeals seems to be a subordinate body, which may recommend but cannot order a man's release. The police, military or civilian, lurks in the background and it is excessively suspicious of any man who belonged to a party of the Left. There seems to be little hope for the rank and file, who risked their all as active, militant members of a Socialist Party or Trade Union. They wrote no books, but often they ventured life and limb for the cause. We know, for example, of two German sailors, Aryans, who were members of the International Federation of Transport Workers. That fact alone stamps them as resolute enemies of the Nazi régime. They then fought in the Lincoln Brigade in Spain. Yet they are classed as Nazis in the A Group, and as "prisoners of war" in Canada are liable to be handed over to the enemy, when peace returns.

Mr. Herbert Morrison rightly devoted his attention, first of all, to the arduous task that faced him in London. He is now on the point of making considerable and welcome improvements in the system of internment devised by his predecessor. We would urge him, however, to go very much further. His reforms, if we may trust the forecasts, will still leave the majority of the refugees prisoners behind barbed wire. This war, Mr. Churchill has told us, may drag on into 1944 or 1945. Is it tolerable that innocent men, entitled, as victims of the enemy's oppression, to our sympathy, should be shut up within a crowded enclosure for four years on end? It is a great mitigation of this hardship that their wives may be permitted to join them. Something has been done and more can still be done to provide facilities for study, work and recreation. But the camps are not spacious: privacy is impossible and their inmates can never forget that they are prisoners guarded by troops who carry ball cartridge and fixed bayonets. An amendment to this plan is perfectly easy. We would urge that a spacious region be set aside for some of these refugees, within which they may walk about and lead normal lives as free men. The guards and the military commandants should disappear. This family settlement should be self-governing, under the supervision of the recognised refugee organisation (Bloomsbury House). The obvious place for such a colony is the Isle of Man.

If this amendment were accepted, the Germans and Austrians with whom we are concerned would then fall naturally into three groups. (*a*) In the first are the avowed Nazis, with others who have no claim to be reckoned as refugees. These would be interned, as at present, but with every reasonable alleviation of their lot. (*b*) The second group includes the active opponents of Hitlerism, rankers as well as leaders. These should be released, promptly and without conditions, for they are our allies and comrades in this struggle. The party executives of the German and Austrian Opposition, Liberals and Catholics as well as Socialists, should be invited to submit lists of their members whose good faith they can guarantee. Only the doubtful cases, where some ground for suspicion exists, would then be reviewed by a tribunal. (*c*) Finally, the biggest class, the men who took no active part in the struggle, most of them racial refugees, would go with the doubtful cases to the island settlement. The younger men should be invited, but not coerced, to join the Pioneer Corps. But no man should be pressed into military service against his country of origin. For those who cannot face that form of help other organised groups should be open, which might engage in forestry or agriculture. To Mr. Morrison we look for something better than a mere alleviation of Sir John Anderson's plan. Imprisonment is not the proper treatment for refugees.

NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

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INTERIM REPORT ON COVENTRY

As regularly as a bus service, the German bombers—500 according to some estimates—flew into the centre of Coventry for eleven hours, and the devastation they caused is, by its very concentration, the worst I have seen. It is more appalling to look at than even the worst-bombed parts of East London, because it is as though to the rubble of the London Dockland streets had been added the wreckage of the tall buildings of Holborn and Oxford Street and there had been placed in the centre the last-war ruins of the Cloth Hall at Ypres.

What those eleven hours meant to the people of Coventry is just hinted at in the remark of one man who, with his wife, two-months-old baby, two young children and eight others, was in a shelter in the very heart of it. "Every time we struggled off the floor," he said, "we were flung flat on our faces again by the force of another bomb."

And terrific fires were ringing them round, fires into and around which the bombers poured each load of bombs. Judging by the way in which some of the big buildings in the City Centre had been trampled into mash, they must have had dozens of heavy bombs on each. The Cathedral was left like the fretwork walls of a film set.

Most, but not all, of the bombs fell in that fire-lit target of the Centre; they destroyed much that was beautiful and historic as well as the crowded back streets which were the homes of the workers. After that night of agony, the death-roll and the casualty list seemed likely to be terrible. The one great consolation is that, measured by the damage, it was almost miraculously small.

With the dawn, the dazed people came out of their shelters, their cellars and their hiding-places under the stairs and there began an exodus which was like the flood of refugees in Belgium and France. They carried the few belongings they had or piled them on perambulators or hand-carts or the wrecks of cars, and trekked out along the radial roads which run "round the clock" out of Coventry.

"We were making for the woods," I was told over and over again. "All we knew was that we would not spend another night among buildings." Large numbers slept in the open, although marshals and search-parties went out to find them and to try to persuade them to go to food and rest centres which had been thrown open to them over a wide area of the Midlands.

I have called this an "Interim Report" because it would be manifestly unfair to everyone concerned to form a judgment of what was done or left undone. For one thing, the destruction of the City Centre, and the ordeal which officials themselves went through, left the relief arrangements of Coventry itself almost paralysed. Out of 14 food and rest centres which had been established, only four were fit to function that first day. It was almost impossible in those first hours to get buses and coaches into the heart of the City to collect the homeless. Help for the stricken City had to come from outside, and it did. The Midland cities responded magnificently.

Mr. Herbert Morrison, Minister for Home Security, and Lord Beaverbrook, Member of the War Cabinet, were there on the Friday. The King went on the Saturday and was left in no doubt about the incredible spirit of the people, by then recovered from the daze and shock. The distinguished visitors were told a lot of blunt truths by the Mayor, Mr. J. A. Moseley, a retired railwayman, who, with the Mayoress, had been rescued from their garden shelter to find their home wrecked.

Even while the bombs were falling during the night, the Midland Regional authorities were acting with commendable thoroughness and expedition. They were summoning assistance from all over the Midlands and beyond. And it came. On the Friday morning, Miss Florence Horsburgh, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Health, and leading officials of the Ministry, all of whom had had wide experience of the breakdown in London and had taken the lessons well to heart, went to Coventry. Miss Horsburgh, sparing the hard-pressed local officials, proceeded to create her own organisation, among the ruins. She sent an S O S to the Ministry's inspectors all over central England and, leaving everything else, they rushed by motor cars to Coventry. Under great difficulties, they established marshalling points outside the devastated area of the Centre and, with the splendid assistance of the Coventry transport manager and his staff, they somehow contrived to get buses and coaches there. More transport poured in from other cities.

While they were grappling with the difficult problem of the homeless, they were also clearing the hospitals. That was a fine job. Hospitals had been hit, but everyone had been saved and the Ministry immediately began to move everyone out, including the chronic sick and the ordinary patients as well as the casualties. By mid-day on Saturday all the casualties had been got away.

In three counties, food and rest centres were thrown open for the homeless. Over 20,000 blankets were sent into the area. The Ministry of Food organised an emergency food supply for a city which was almost destitute of food. Loaves by the hundred thousand poured in from other cities and districts. Water carts and flexible piping were rushed through to give the people water while Ministry of Information loud-speakers toured the City giving, in addition to directions for the homeless, instructions to boil all water and milk in case of typhoid. Later the M.O.H. opened clinics for inoculation against typhoid, and the response was good.

At the reception ends, food and rest centres made provision for the large numbers they had to receive. I was particularly impressed by the spontaneous response of the soldiers in the country districts. It was not a case of "calling in the military," the soldiers did what they saw was necessary without waiting for orders from higher up. They turned over their kitchens and cooked hot meals. The Quarter-Masters are likely to have headaches trying to account for lots of things. And the soldiers helped mothers with their babies and even went round telling them how they should sleep. With experience of barrack-room hygiene they told the people not to sleep with their heads close together but top-to-tail, to prevent spread of infection.

But immediately the men and lots of the women revived, they insisted on going back into Coventry, but not to sleep. Out of 250 in one centre only 14 remained for the mid-day meal, although there was a full muster again at night. The men were going back to see what had happened to their work and, to collect, if possible, their pay. The women went back to their homes and to try to have their husbands' meals ready "as usual." When I tell you that on Sunday I looked down on a city and saw chimneys smoking above roofless houses; that I saw women grubbing through the debris to their coal-cellars and using their wrecked furniture for kindling, and that they walked miles with pitchers for water for the meals, I hope I have answered the question, "What is the spirit of the people like?"

Thirty-seven mobile canteens moved in to feed the people. And 17 feeding centres were opened. Much more quickly than anyone had expected, utility services were restored and shops reopened. Coventry struggled back to virile life, and its will to live was in the spirit of its people.

RITCHIE CALDER

A LONDON DIARY

I HAPPENED to be staying in Birmingham on the night Coventry was bombed. All night long fleets of planes droned overhead and in the morning I heard the whole appalling story. Except for the first week-end of the *Blitzkrieg* in the East End, nothing in this country has been comparable with Coventry. An R.A.F. man said that the only parallel in his experience was the German bombing in Belgium; he had been at Courtrai and the only feature missing was the machine-gunning of the refugees on the roads. One of the most terrible features was the inadequacy of the water supply; it was lack of water after the first two hours in Coventry that turned what would have been an ordinary big raid into a burning inferno. Once the fires were under control and new services were improvised, people seem to have recovered themselves in an extraordinary way. Several independent observers have told me astonishing stories. I like the remark of a very fat and paralysed man whom three people lifted into an evacuation car. He told them that he could not get out of bed himself, but had been blown out by the side of his wife, who was under the bed. "The Lord," he said, "did not want me and the missus to be parted. Even He has to use rough methods in war time!"

* * *

Pondering such stories, I listened to the British wireless, which gave in the same bulletin an admirably honest talk by Tom Harrisson from Coventry and an account of a big British raid on Hamburg, told with a gusto that was obviously intended to satisfy a demand for reprisals. Tom Harrisson reported that the people in Coventry did not want reprisals; people who have really been bombed do not want a similar misery for others. They want the method that is most effective in ending the war in a way that will save us from conquest and common people everywhere from horror of this kind. A friend who has been working in Coventry since the horror quotes the remark: "This is not war, it's murder. I hope we stick to war." For once I agree with General Fuller who deplores the irresponsible demand for indiscriminate reprisals from certain newspapers which consider neither the technical facts nor the long-distance considerations. I was glad to find that

my R.A.F. observer took the same view, and surprised that A. J. Cummings, usually so level-headed and intelligent, took a different view in the *News Chronicle*. I heartily agreed with him that there is ground for complaint that the military authorities are slow about the "secret weapon" promised against night bombing. And possibly we differ less than appears at first sight. For he urges that we threaten reprisals against a German city, if Germany repeats this indiscriminate attack on civilians. This would be wise tactics if it means that we use the good offices of a neutral formally to suggest that this type of killing be ruled out on both sides, pointing out that we shall be in a position after a time with American help to do worse than Germany. One kind of bunk we could well dispense with. Why does Mr. Greenwood tell the public that the R.A.F. is already doing far worse to Germany than they to us? That we have done more military damage, I readily believe, because British bombing has been directed to military objectives. But that we actually do more damage is impossible; we have less planes and farther to travel.

* * *

A point much emphasised by A.R.P. workers in recent raids is that everyone should carry with them a whistle or some other means of making a noise. Much life, they say, would have been saved if people trapped in shelters had been able to make a louder noise to tell the rescue parties where they were.

* * *

One of the rediscoveries usually made in wartime is that the bulk of the population are poor and that the rich are comparatively few in number. The rediscovery is made not for the purpose of advocating a more egalitarian society but to demonstrate that the poor must make a large contribution to war sacrifices, and that because the rich are so few in number not very much can be exacted from them. Some of these arguments almost imply that it is hardly worth while bothering the rich with war taxation. Thus we find the Hon. R. H. Brand arguing in the *Times* that, while the well-to-do should submit to rationing and other forms of universal restriction, their expenditure, which consists of paying wages to domestic servants and gardeners and on meeting the upkeep of houses, is another matter altogether. For, says Mr. Brand, having dispensed with all employees who can find war work, he will do no good by closing houses, dismissing employees too old for other work and gardeners growing vegetables. It is unfortunate that this argument happens to suit the book of people belonging to Mr. Brand's class, and still more unfortunate that it does not hold water. If a chauffeur, however old and decrepit, can drive Mr. Brand about he can drive evacuees. If servants, however infirm, can wait upon Mr. Brand they can perform similar services for unfortunate shelterers in the Tubes. If a gardener, however rheumatic, can raise vegetables for Mr. Brand he can raise them for a public institution. If Mr. Brand has spare accommodation for his friends and relatives it can be filled by soldiers, refugees and other less fortunate people. If Mr. Brand has the purchasing power to command these resources it can be transferred to the Exchequer and the resources will thereby be at the command of the State. There may be a subtle case demonstrating that the service of these resources to Mr. Brand frees his time to write letters which may induce other people to surrender still more valuable resources. But it is a recondite argument and the onus should be put on Mr. Brand, first by taking away the resources from him and then compelling him to make out a special case for their return. If Mr. Brand does not understand this he has not grasped the full implications of war economics and, it must be regretfully added, is not qualified to instruct the rest of us.

* * *

More balderdash has been written about Mr. Joseph Kennedy, lately American Ambassador to this country, than one could have thought possible. He is a great hand at being superficially friends with everyone. As a publicity agent he is first-class, with the result that when he left this country the gossip writers fell over themselves with descriptions of his sympathy and understanding of Britain, and so forth. Actually he belongs to that big business crowd whose main reason for deploring the war was that it was bad for the stock markets; these people have all along assumed that Europe would have to be Nazi. It was expected when he reached the United States that Mr. Kennedy would come out for Willkie. Mr. Roosevelt seems to have used his well-known charm—I gather that it was backed in this case by some even more potent weapon—to procure from Mr. Kennedy a broadcast that gave grudging support to his Third Term. Now Mr. Kennedy has expressed his real feelings and finally dished himself with the press, by complaining that he has been misquoted and that what he said was off the record. No one will take this very seriously, for the reports certainly state his real opinion. When he said that democracy is done for anyway, he meant, I suppose, *laisser-faire* capitalism—that is, the free market side of the democratic tradition. This is, of course, what Willkie also meant by democracy. I agree with him that that is done for anyway. One of our contemporaries, I see, devotes an article to urging that Mr. Kennedy should not return to England. I can say with knowledge that there never has been any chance of Mr. Kennedy's return. He knew that himself quite well before he left England.

* * *

There was a nasty mess in the street. A direct hit had spilt the house into the road. A woman had been killed; she was a doctor and scientist. The rubble was piled high; scraps of furniture and battered fragments of cloth and carpets made patterns in the rubble. Poised on the very top of the ruin of what had once been a cultured household, was a picture. It was undamaged and a face stared down at us with startling intensity. It was a picture of Neanderthal man.

CRITIC.

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to C. I. Oaten.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

I have simply stated that Sunday variety concerts are an offence against the Almighty, and, as such, are gravely imperilling our national effort.—Correspondent in the *Oxford Mail*.

Another company to suffer severely from the effects of taxation is Rhokana Corporation. In a preliminary statement issued this week the directors say that "very large provisions will have to be made to satisfy the liabilities for income tax and excess profits tax." For this reason, despite larger profits, the final dividend is reduced from 25 to 15 per cent., making 40 per cent. for the year, against 50 per cent.—Financial Page, *Observer*.

The Home Guard tie also has already been designed and is on sale in most areas, and if the Home Guard tie can become as popular and carry as much weight as certain other ties the future of the Force should be assured.—*Country Life*.

The Rev. Claud Coffin, of Harborne, in a lecture at Malvern, said an eccentricity known as "futurist" had crept into the realm of art. There were sculptural atrocities of Jacob Epstein in London.

"I wonder if they are going to escape the bombs," he remarked.—*Birmingham Evening Despatch*.

THE MEN WHO WALK IN THE STREETS

WE all know the bullet-proof train which the Führer twice used for his meetings with Mussolini. We know the big car—a Mercedes, isn't it?—in which the Führer rides through Berlin, standing up, his arm extended in a rigid acknowledgment of salutes—behind an invisible wall of bullet-proof glass. We know the dramatic gestures of the Duce on one or the other of the high balconies of a huge palace or on a promontory-like tribune from whence he shouts to masses carefully ringed by compact lines of blackshirts. We know the Moorish—not Spanish—bodyguard which surrounds the Caudillo Franco in theatrical display when he rides through Madrid, in a bullet-proof car which the Führer has presented him.

On the other hand, we know Mr. Chamberlain and Winston Churchill and the King and the Queen walking on foot through the streets of British towns.

Press photographers all over the world have furnished such ample proof for both series of facts that nobody can deny them.

Every dictator has, not one but a bevy of inferiority complexes, yet doubtless the most galling of these complexes is a hopeless longing after being able to walk in the streets freely and safely. Certainly Hitler remembers with bitterness the time when he could shout his fill in the beer-halls of Munich, in the midst of a circle of customers who emptied their tankards and wiped the froth from their moustaches. Mussolini must remember, bitterly, his days as a Socialist when he spoke in rural meetings where the men gave him a friendly slap on the back and invited him to share their brackish wine. Franco will remember the days of the disaster of Melilla when the Foreign Legionaries adored him for his gallantry and we soldiers of the conscript army saluted him with respect and affection as a commander—when he went to cafés and casinos among his brother officers with the unself-conscious authority a straight and clear personality gives to a man.

The three dictators, the two big ones and their unfortunate Spanish imitator, have irrevocably lost their birthright of simple and fearless life among their fellow men, for they have lost their personal cleanness and dignity in their quest for power. They have lost with this

dignity the most valuable quality a man possesses, the only quality which enables him to go down the stairs of his home, to tread the pavement and to take a walk among his countrymen without fear.

Hitler and Mussolini have killed very many men who thus walked the streets, in confidence and dignity. Hitler killed many like Edgar André or Hans Litten, Mussolini killed many like Matteotti. And Franco has recently killed Luis Companys, had him executed in a jail of Barcelona, just as it can be said that he killed old and infirm Don Julian Besteiro by a prison sentence which everybody knew to be a death sentence. Companys died in his Barcelona. Besteiro died in his Madrid, which he never left when the danger was greatest, and where he always had walked about without heeding the dogs that barked at him.

These two men of my country, of whom I can speak out of direct knowledge and not from second-hand information, as in the case of Germans or Italians, led lives that were different and yet parallel. I do not propose to discuss their political ideas nor do I intend to write their epitaphs. I have never agreed with their political ideas, and their epitaphs belong to history. I only want to talk of them as men with the highest human qualities—the qualities of honest men with clean hands, weak in attack against their enemies, but strong, very strong indeed, in face of attacks against themselves. Their fortitude was that of a conviction which could not be bought for anything, neither by the praise of friends nor by money, nor by honours from the opposite camp. They remained upright, firm in their convictions, right or wrong, during the violent tempests which in the end swept our country into chaos and ruin and put it into the hands of the brutal adventurers of the twentieth century. Up to the very end, Julian Besteiro and Luis Companys freely walked through the streets of Madrid and Barcelona. Like Churchill or Bevin or the King of England in London or Glasgow, now.

The death of those two Spanish democrats is a lesson in history. Neither of them had that particular courage needed to lead a people in arms. The two hated bloodshed because they loved humanity too much—they were what is called "humanists" in Spain. Companys paid for his humanism, which forbade him to set his Catalan countrymen to fight against other Catalans in the sanguinary period of the Asturian rising, by being sentenced to thirty years of prison. Besteiro paid already, as far back as 1917, by the same sentence for having stopped the soldiers—men of the people—from firing against striking workers—men of the people, too—in Cuatro Caminos. He paid again last year when he lent his personal authority to the desperate efforts of negotiating the surrender of unconquered Madrid to Franco with a minimum of bloodshed and sacrifices (as if conquering dictators were men to keep a promise!) Both Companys and Besteiro were once freed from prison and made leaders by the same people whom they had tried to save from internal bloodshed. To-day they are dead; killed because not the people now rules in Spain but Fascist brutality, thinly disguised by military glamour and a varnish of Christian-sounding phrases. The two humanists were capable of facing the unleashed force of the masses, brute but fertile and generous. But they were powerless against the brute force of totalitarian reaction.

The death of Companys puts a brand of shame on the French leaders of to-day, who made mock of the traditions of their country as an asylum for persecuted men and surrendered the Catalan leader—the ally of another France—into the hands of the Spanish police, in repulsive submission to the wishes of the Führer. But neither this surrender, shameful as that of Judas, only for even less money, nor Companys' death, will smother a living idea, as little as the death of any martyr. In this case, the living idea is that of independence of Catalonia. Every Catalan who considers Catalan his mother-tongue will mourn for Luis Companys and will close his fist, not in a political gesture but as a sign of retribution to come.

Yet, I have no intention to speak of my country's tragedy. What I want is to stress to you, the British, the significance of men who can walk in the streets, freely—the physical and the moral valour of a cigar hanging in the corner of a mouth, or a casual bowler hat. Don't let it get lost. Defend it, as we Spaniards perhaps did not know how to defend it, although we stoically supported bombs and shells of the same trade mark as the shells and bombs that now fall on you. If one day you should see those men, your leaders, in their humanism afraid of more sacrifice of lives, then urge them on. Give them new spirit. Acclaim them in the streets of your towns whenever they walk there. Tell them that life is not only valueless but will be lost in the end by the hands of butchers, in shameful darkness, if there is too much fear that others—you—might die.

ARTURO BAREA

PATTERN OF A DAY

THERE was a sprinkling of snow on the hills one morning, and the next, there was a thin coating of ice on the pond. All the children of the evacuation gathered round its edges and in a high tide of happiness began to throw things on to the ice. They also stooped down and cracked it, and, taking sections of it in their hands, flung them to join the sticks and rubble that were already defacing the frozen water. There is nothing that seems to appeal more strongly to the destructive instincts of the young than the spectacle of newly formed ice. If human beings were born rational, children would say to themselves on seeing ice: "We must take care not to throw anything on this so that, if it freezes hard, we may have a good surface for sliding." But children do not reason—or talk—in this fashion. If they see a piece of ice they feel an uncontrollable impulse to crack it. I once did myself.

Probably, curiosity is part of the reason for this. Ice is a comparatively rare thing in this climate, and any infant with a scientific bent will naturally inquire into its properties by kicking a hole in it with the heel of his shoe and taking it up in his hands. This hard, cold substance has the beauty of novelty. Besides, if a pond is frozen over, the scientific mind will be eager to know what has happened to the water underneath. There are, however, aesthetic as well as scientific reasons for human misbehaviour round a frozen pond. To skim a stone along the surface of the ice gives pleasure to the imagination. It makes a pretty noise, and the miracle of frictionless speed charms the eye. Then, apart from this, there is the great joy of destruction—always a conspicuous element in human behaviour. Many boys like even to break the windows of empty houses. The sound of crashing glass is music to them. They have been known to tear up newly planted saplings beside arterial roads. In a street in which I once lived there was a notice on every lime-tree that adorned the pavement: "Please protect what is devoted to your enjoyment." This seems to me to have shown considerable knowledge of human nature. It was based on the assumption that man, left to himself, is a fairly destructive animal, not to be trusted even with a lime-tree.

And so the children continued their fell work beside the pond. Some of them wore gum-boots and walked about in the muddy water, cracking such ice as was in their way. Then there was the sound of the creaking of a swan's wings overhead, and a beautiful bird, a stranger from nowhere, descended among the broken ice. The children paused from their misdeeds to stare at him. Some of them threw pebbles at him to see what he would do, but he treated them with dignified indifference. He found some bread that had been thrown to the ducks, and ate it without even glancing at his admirers. "I didn't know swans could fly," said one little boy when he had recovered from his first awe. (It is odd how many things some of these children from town do not know about animals. One of them thought that the geese were ducks that had grown to their full stature. Another of them, pointing to a cow, asked a farmer: "Is that a cow or a pig?" He immorally told the child that it was a pig.)

The swan continued to brood on the pond till it was near tea-time. By this time he had ceased to be a novelty and only the confirmed bird-lovers among the children remained to watch him. I myself was indoors when he rose for his homeward flight. Hearing the creak of wings I hurried outside and saw him circling above, attempting to make up his mind which direction to take. "Did you see him take off?" one small boy asked another. "I did," said the other proudly. "Look, look," they all cried excitedly, their puny arms pointing to the north; "he's flying over the hill." And a few moments later: "Look, look, he's coming back," as the long neck came nearer, aiming at the south-west. Again he wavered and changed his course, then, as if he had scented home, flew straight into the south-east, and we saw no more of him.

I went into the inn later on. Meeting a friend I asked him whether he had seen the swan. He had not, and I felt I was the luckier of the two. "By the way," he said, "isn't there some superstition about swans! I can't remember whether it's supposed to be lucky or unlucky for a swan to come like that out of the blue, but I'm sure there's a well-known superstition about it." I told him that I did not believe in superstitions about birds and instanced the fact that I had been seeing single magpies at frequent intervals through my life and had never known any ill-luck to follow. "You mean to say," said a soldier, "that the magpie's considered an unlucky bird?" I quoted the "one for sorrow, two for joy" rhyme. "That's funny,"

he said, " because it's the bird of the Newcastle United Football Club." I told him that I had heard there were some counties in which a single magpie was believed to be lucky and suggested that Northumberland might be one of them.

A little oldish man sitting in the corner asked whether swans, lucky or unlucky, were dangerous. I said I thought not, except in the breeding season, though to be honest, I have very little confidence in swans. He said he had heard that they could break a man's leg with a blow from a wing. Turkey-cocks, too, he declared, were sometimes dangerous. " There was a turkey-cock once at a place I worked," he said, " that would attack anybody. He would jump on to your back and knock you down. He was a terrible bird. No tradesman dared to approach the house without a whip in his hand while that turkey-cock was about. Oh, dear no," he said, smiling to himself at the happy memory. He agreed, however, that most animals were dangerous only when defending their young : " Take even a rabbit," he said. " When a rabbit has young it will turn on a stoat and attack it. Yet at any other time a stoat can do what it likes with it. And do you know another thing : the rabbit that has been killed by a stoat is the best rabbit—the best to eat. You see, the stoat has drained all the blood out of it. He catches it just here "—and he gave a nip to the back of his neck—" and he never eats the rabbit unless he's starving. If you ever get a rabbit that has been killed by a stoat, I'm sure you'll like it. Oh, it's beautiful," he said, shaking his head as if in a dream of bliss.

I found to my surprise that every one present except myself liked rabbit. I am inclined to think that, if there were no edible animals except rabbits in the world, I should be a vegetarian. The leg of a rabbit seems to me to be something beyond the power of the art of the cook to make palatable. Yet I have heard gourmets praise the rabbit and declare that in France it is a delicacy. And the other day I sat in a restaurant beside a friend who deliberately chose rabbit from an otherwise attractive menu. I remember, too, how during the food shortage towards the end of the last war men hungrily talked about rabbits as they made their way to town in the morning by train. One of the great sensations of the time was the complete disappearance of rabbits as soon as the price was controlled. Some people attributed this to capitalism. Others, more cautious, did not know what to attribute it to. Both parties, however, as they sat in their trains talked more longingly about rabbits than men can ever have talked about rabbits before. I remember hearing one little man in a corner seat repeating : " Give me a wild one," at intervals all the way from Redhill to London. To-day some men are talking in much the same way about onions.

Having exhausted the subject of rabbits, we began to talk about flowers, one of the company having seen five primroses in bloom that morning. I know comparatively little about the correct dates for the appearances of the flowers, but I thought it was safe to boast that there was still a periwinkle in blossom at the cottage. Whether it is usual to see the periwinkle lasting till the winter jasmine is in flower, I do not know ; but I boasted all the same. " Flowers out of season, troubles beyond reason," a pessimist quoted from the ingle-nook. I am afraid superstition must be on the increase in England. It is becoming almost impossible to mention any interesting occurrence without someone's dragging a cheerless old country saw out of the obscurity to which it should have been relegated for ever. For myself I believe that, if flowers are now growing out of season, it is because since the beginning of the year we have passed through a remarkable winter, a remarkable spring, a remarkable summer, and a remarkable autumn.

Still, let the talk swing as it will ; an extraordinary amount of it is good to listen to. How good it was, for example, to hear a man with a pint in front of him discoursing of ancient wars that had swept over a village three miles away many centuries ago ! " They say," he declared, " that the Romans and the Saxons fought a battle there about the year 800, and that the village green ran ankle-deep in blood, with the result that there has never been a mole-hill on the green since." Later in the evening a man told a story about the present war which may be well known, but which I had not heard before. He said that during the invasion threat this summer a man got into the train and announced that an invasion had just taken place at Hastings. " Who told you that ? " asked another man in the compartment. " A porter at Leatherhead," he answered. " He must have been a very old porter," said the other man. . . .

Children enthusiastically breaking the ice, a swan descending from the sky on to the village pond, men talking—on the whole, not a bad way to spend a day.

Y. Y.

POEM

(" *Et pourtant c'est triste quand meurent les empires* ")

IT is wrong to be sad,
To see the death of an Empire as tragedy, the ruins in rows
As a hideous disaster, and the enemy for whom are used
So many playful names, as pitiless foes.

You should learn to pass
The church where multitudes were trapped, the gutted shop
Lightly, or with some humorous remark,
Some " Jerry again ! " or " I'll bet that made them hop ! "

It is wrong to doubt
Cheerful assurances about secret weapons and devices
This year, next year, some time ; about despair in Rome,
Shortage and soaring prices.

Et pourtant c'est triste—
Those words, I do not know why,
Found in a French book weeks ago still haunt me :
" It is sad when empires die."

ARTHUR WALEY

COUNTRY NOTES

November, 1940

I REPEAT here only what every country-lover and diarist has recorded publicly or privately of this autumn : that it has been one of the richest ever seen. The woods did not promise well in October ; they delayed so long in their colouring that we who watched them began to think they would take no colour at all, but would merely turn sere, fall, and decay. (How odd that Tennyson, most painfully conscientious of observers, should have got the sequence of nature wrong ! " The woods decay, the woods decay and fall. . . ." Tennyson experts might note this passage as an example of the poet forgetting the pedant. The rhythm delighted him so much that he was able to overlook the fact that leaves fall before they decay ; and how much the better poet he. But he seems to have set little store by this poem. " I ferreted among my old books," he writes, " and found this *Tithonus*, written upwards of a quarter of a century ago, and now, queerly enough, at the tail of a flashy novel.")

After this digression I resume. How mistaken we were in thinking that this year the woods would take no colour ! A short patience while October turned over into November, and then the hour came, the woods turned into the expected red and yellow and russet, the wild cherries became fires, the beeches and the chestnuts burned along the lanes, the Field of the Cloth of Gold with all its tents and pavilions showed only a daylight taper against the woods of Kent and Sussex. I drove through them a few days ago, realising then for the twentieth time that England might look as rich as Tuscany. No need to go for leaves to Vallombrosa.

A sudden dash of green among the woods increased their minted beauty. The copper coins of beech-leaves got stopped and interrupted by the light-green of a larch or the dark-green of a Scotch fir. And in the mornings, at sunrise, the vapour floated like a Turkish muslin yashmak, cutting off the bases of the trees.

War Above the Fields

A strange and beautiful effect is produced in the pale-blue sky by the white trails of aircraft. People who come down here from London always exclaim in surprise, so I suppose that this display must be the privilege of those who can observe it in the country. It used to be difficult to pick up the formations unless the sun happened to glint on their wings, when a flight of white pigeons (as it seemed) could be counted in the blue, soon to be lost again in the haze ; but now the pigeons, although they may themselves become invisible, have turned into shoals of little fish leaving white wakes, two or three inches long, behind them. Straight little streaks they are, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, drawn in chalk on a blue-board, climbing. Then, watching, one sees one minnow detach itself from the rest and take out its own line in a rush as grand as a hooked trout, streaming across, then returning on itself like a skater cutting a figure on ice, apparently about to collide with another adventurer but never colliding ; then tumbling round in swirls which finally dissolve into wraiths as the shoal recedes into the distance of the sky.

An hour or so later, a Spitfire comes past, flying low, in a tremendous hurry, roaring, gone in a flash.

The wraiths hang lingering, still widening, dissolving, pretending now to be clouds, deceitful, delicate, fluffy, making a mock of the heaven, beautifying it.

Sir Philip Joubert *v.* Dog

I do not know Sir Philip Joubert personally. I wish I did. I like his voice and his disagreeable honesty. I prefer his nasty truths to the pleasant half-truths or untruths of other people. Like many other listeners, I have been amused and even stirred by the controversy he provoked when he said that it was impossible to tell the difference between an English and a German plane by sound alone. The resultant joke was a good one, about the woman overheard saying, "Sir Philip Joubert says he can't tell the difference between an English and a German plane. I can."

Our shepherd here goes one better, or rather his dog does. The dog knows the difference—so says the shepherd—and will creep under the hedge at the sound of an enemy engine but will take no notice at all of Spitfire or Hurricane. Take it or leave it, as you like.

Incidentally, I submit that the whole split of difference between Sir Philip and his listeners may lie in one very simple explanation. The sound which country people recognise as German is the trundling sound of bombers. The sound which they recognise as English is the quick rush of the fighters. In other words, they can tell the difference between bomber and fighter, though not necessarily between German bomber and English bomber, German fighter and English fighter. Is this the answer to Sir Philip's storm-raising remark?

V. SACKVILLE-WEST

SHE WANTED TO PICK BLUEBELLS

WHEN Jim Edwards took delivery of his new motor-bike from the garage, he made one or two trial spins up and down the road where he lived and then went off, popping like a road drill, to see Trixie.

He knocked hard on Trixie's door. It was not opened at once, but Jim did not mind waiting, because it gave him a chance to gaze proudly at his machine propped against the kerb. It was squat and powerful, glittering in the sun like a dragonfly.

He knocked again. This time the door opened, and there was Trixie, smoothing down her frock, her best blue one.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, as if she were surprised to see him, which she was not.

"Hello, Trixie," he said. "I've brought it round."

"Lovely," Trixie said. "You don't mind if I touch it, do you?"

"Of course not," he said.

"What's that for?" she said.

She pressed a little black button and the motor-bike bleated stridently. Trixie jumped; and the round face of old Mr. Hopkins appeared at his window, mouthing silently, just like Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer's lion in the days before sound.

"That's the horn," Jim said. "You shouldn't have done that. You'll wake people from their afternoon nap."

"It's lovely," Trixie said.

"How about coming for a ride to-morrow?"

"I ought to go with mother to church," Trixie said.

"You can skip that for once," Jim said. "This is a special occasion."

"Could we go where there's bluebells?"

"Of course," he said eagerly. "I know a place where there's lots of bluebells."

"All right," she said. "I'll come if we can go where there's bluebells."

So next morning he called for Trixie. It was a wonderfully clear day, no cloud in the sky, and it was plain it was going to be really hot for the time of year.

Jim straddled the machine, and waited for Trixie to get on to the pillion.

"I can't sit down," Trixie said.

"Pull your skirt up," Jim said.

"It shows my knees," she said.

"That's how it is with motor-bikes," Jim said. "You've got to show your knees if you're a girl."

"I don't think it's nice," she said.

They rode off, Trixie displaying her bright knees, her legs making a V to the foot-rests. When they were clear of the town Jim let the bike have its way. They had a fine stretch of road to themselves, and they touched 65.

"When it gets run-in," Jim shouted, "it'll do eighty easy."

"Speak louder!" Trixie shouted back.

It was so funny. The wind caught hold of Jim's words as soon as they were out of his mouth, and flung them far away so she couldn't hear them.

They were going slower now.

"It was beautiful," Trixie said. "Like being in a speedboat."

After a while she said:

"Jim."

"Yes?"

"Will you stop a bit?"

"What for?"

"I've got a ladder."

"That's just like a girl," Jim said. "Do you think a chap's going to stop a bike just for a ladder?"

"Well," she said, "it's running all the way up my leg. Like a mouse."

"We'll stop in a bit and find a field."

"What for?"

"So as we can park the bike and—and look around."

"What do we want to do that for?"

"Well, you ought to know *that*."

"To pick bluebells?"

"Hell, no!" he shouted.

He steered the machine into a lane overhung with the young foliage of elms, tranquil and cool as the nave of a cathedral. Alongside a field of lush green, Jim stopped.

"Jim, are the bluebells here?"

"Let's sit down awhile first," Jim said.

"But I want to pick bluebells."

"There'll be plenty of time for that," Jim said.

They found a bank that was like a cosy emerald armchair. And there they sat, in the warm sun.

Jim looked at Trixie, a lingering tender look.

"Your eyes are prettier then bluebells," he said.

"Don't be silly," Trixie said.

"That's not silly," Jim said. "You ought to be glad I said it to you."

"I think it's silly."

"Don't you like being told how nice you are?"

"No."

"Go on, all girls do," he teased.

"Not nice girls."

"I think you're the sweetest girl I've ever seen. I often dream about how lovely you are."

"I think that's sillier than what you said before."

"Oh, God!" he mumbled.

"What say?"

"I didn't say anything," Jim said.

An aeroplane drifted overhead, its engine drowsy with distance. It looked peaceful, beautiful. Gazing up at it, Jim felt a longing that disturbed him. He moved nearer to Trixie.

"Isn't it nice, lying like this with no work to do?" Trixie said. "I wonder why we have to go to offices and learn shorthand at night? Work's a nuisance."

"It's so as we can have things," Jim said. "Motor-bikes, for instance. Or a house. Trixie, don't you, don't you ever feel you want a home of your own, with your own table and rug and spoons? And a radio, which you and your husband can listen to each evening?"

"I've never thought about it," she said.

"Have you ever been in love?"

"Of course not," she said.

"Hasn't nobody ever kissed you?"

"No," she said. "It's wrong."

Jim slid an arm across the grass and clasped her hand.

"Darl . . ." he began.

"Your hand is all sweaty," Trixie said.

Jim sprang suddenly to his feet. Trixie looked up hopefully.

"Shall we go and get some bluebells now?" she said.

"No," Jim said.

"Why?"

"Because we're going home now."

"But what about my bluebells?"

"To hell with bluebells!" he said.

They climbed back into the road; Jim kicked the starter, and the engine of the motor-bike burst into a roar. He fiddled with a lever on the handlebar and it became quieter.

"It's a lovely bike," Trixie said. "It'll be nice for getting into the country week-ends."

"I don't think you really wanted to pick bluebells," she said.

"If you didn't, I don't know why we came," she said.

"Why don't you answer?" she said.

CLIFFORD DYMENT

THE MOVIES

"Hired Wife," at the Odeon
"Waterloo Bridge," at the Empire
"North-West Mounted Police," at the Carlton
"On Foreign Newsfronts," March of Time

The *Daily Express* runs a temperature chart of new films. Every week, with a possible 100°, their film critic drips at 80 or 85 where you or I might have felt it was bordering 30, but the chief drawback of the temperature method is that obviously, apart from merit, the same film that frizzles one person can freeze another. Some other distinction is needed, and I suggest a sweet or dry classification from sherries. In the above list *Hired Wife* could be called medium dry, *Waterloo Bridge* brown, and *North-West Mounted Police*, outside this sort of thing altogether, is a wonderful cheap port. Choose your label.

Hired Wife has Rosalind Russell as the indispensable secretary who runs most things in her employer's (Brian Aherne) life, including his love affairs. She manages, in fact, everything except getting him to fall in love with her. Their talk is mental all-in wrestling. Robert Benchley, as the firm's lawyer, usually feebly lit up, makes a third; and he gives a performance of Thurber-like brilliance, with his drinks, his sheepy trances, and snorings and rootlings in the night that are almost terrifying in their realism. A situation, of course, develops: in order to save the firm's money by transferring it to a wife, Brian Aherne, whose bigness lies in cement and blondes, has to marry in twenty-four hours his black-haired Rosalind. Dog and cat could not be more furiously ruffled by each other; the match is platonic in the best way, he growling and flinging away, she sinking her claws in till at last—after legal turns and spins of sentiment—they rush into one another's arms. Rosalind Russell flings as vivid a performance as it would be possible for anyone, even Myrna Loy, to give us—straight off the ice; and in Brian Aherne, solid and good-looking with a hint of tooth-ache, we seem to catch glimpses of Robert Benchley himself at some earlier stage of existence. This is a gay film, idiomatic, mud-slinging, sexy, without *longueurs* of plot or sentiment, and with the style only Hollywood can put into this sort of thing. Its lines aren't written to be remembered, but in their place they hit every time.

The first few shots of *Waterloo Bridge* almost finished me. War—this war—is declared. A colonel (Robert Taylor) with whitening moustache and astrakhan collar, gets out of his car on the way to Waterloo Station and France, and stands on the makeshift bridge with what novelists call a lengthening face; a face in which (as the camera swings up from the river) are gathered wearily the Past, contempt of the present, and the sensations of a sea-sick llama. After what seems like a long, bad Channel-crossing of memories—the llama face flickers a little—this figure dissolves, and we are back in the Past, and in the thick of the other war. A young captain (Robert Taylor) meets a ballet-dancer (Vivien Leigh) during an air raid, and their falling-in-love is speeded up because he has to go off to the front a few days later. This part of *Waterloo Bridge*, despite a few absurdities due to an Anglo-American cast, is quick and charming and takes us alternately into the rigors of the ballet school and the regimental mess. But then, as they are on the point of getting married, he has to go off, and the sentimentalities begin. She sees his name in the casualty lists, hasn't a job, goes on the streets, and he comes back to find her beating the precincts of Waterloo in black satin. Vivien Leigh, who up to now has done wonders with the part so long as freshness and vivacity were needed, isn't so good in the dumps and with her hair down, and the neuroticism that leads to her street-walking and final suicide—on Waterloo Bridge need one add?—lacks conviction. If one began listing the tearful atrocities in which the director finally bogs himself and his cast, it would make the film sound a good deal worse than in fact it is. For there are compensations beside Vivien Leigh: good photography despite a camera fond of swinging; Maria Ouspenskaya as the martinet who keeps the young ladies of the ballet on their toes; Aubrey Smith having the time of his life as Colonel and Duke at the same time—he is far the most genuine period piece in this story. The enchanting air of *Lac des Cygnes* recurs as a sort of theme tune whenever the heroine is reflective. Each time it appears one is lifted out of the glaze of sentiment; and one is made, incidentally, to wonder why so talented a young dancer never gives another thought to the ballet once she is out of it.

North-West Mounted Police celebrates the occasion of Cecil B. De Mille embracing colour. It lasts two and a quarter hours; it has thirteen stars, beginning with Gary Cooper, Madeleine Carroll and Paulette Goddard; more than 150 actors have speaking parts—though I don't know if this includes grunting Indians—and the whole cast numbers over 1,000. De Mille, whose name should surely be De Million, has gone back to the days when Mounties rode in red. Colour in this film, though the blood doesn't flow till after a hour or so, is everywhere red. Red tunics, red in tam-o-shanter and scarf, and apple-red vests (Gary Cooper wears one), and even red under-pants. Only the Indians aren't red. It's a welter. We may look forward, says the publicity sheet of Paramount, to a "*Mary of Nazareth* in colour." What colour?

"March of Time" is still in black and white. *On Foreign Newsfronts* involves the sort of brief synopsis of war events we have seen before, but it couldn't be done better than it is here, and the centre has shifted to the news conference and telegraph room. We are let into a number of secrets: Mr. Knickerbocker doesn't look nearly so impressive as his dispatches, and he is described by the Voice, without malice, as "William Randolph Hearst's sensation-hunter." It is rather a pity the film had to be confined to American correspondents, because there are some of us who would like to have seen Madame Tabouis and M. de Kerillis in action. However, we are shown, by way of compensation, a press conference at the Ministry of Information; the M.O.I. official at the microphone, breaking some good news, even bestows an official smile. *On Foreign Newsfronts* is overshadowed by last month's R.A.F. film, but it is up to "March of Time" standard, which says a lot.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, November 23rd—
Sir Richard Acland: "To Win the War and the Peace," Caxton Hall, 2.
Public Meeting for the Release of Nehru, Holborn Hall, 2.15.

SUNDAY, November 24th—
Dr. R. H. Thouless: "Buddhism and Christianity," Conway Hall, 11.
Anglo-German Literary Afternoon for the benefit of German internees, Walter Hudd: Readings from Dickens, 36a Upper Park Road, N.W.3, 2.15.

MONDAY, November 25th—
Fabian Society International Affairs Group Snack Lunch, D. W. Brogan: "What Price America?" 12 Great Newport Street, 1.

TUESDAY, November 26th—
Mrs. M. L. Spring Rice: "Working-class Wives," Housing Centre, 1.
Sir Kenneth Clark: "The Cinema as a Means of Propaganda," Royal Institution, 2.30.
Commandant J. Hackin: Recherches Archéologiques à Begram (Afghanistan), 1939–40, Warburg Inst., 2.30.

WEDNESDAY, November 27th—
Fabian Women's Group Snack Lunch, Caroline Haslett: "Women in Wartime Industry," 12 Great Newport Street, 1.
Edward Stirling et Dorothy Vaughan: "Une heure de Théâtre," Institut Français, 3.

THURSDAY, November 28th—
Dr. R. Wittkower: Raphael: Classical and anti-Classical Tendencies in the Stanze, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1.15.

FRIDAY, November 29th—
Cambridge Students' Convention on the Present Political Situation. Till December 1st.

Correspondence

THE RELEASE OF NEHRU

SIR,—The arrest of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his subsequent imprisonment for four years comes at the end of a fourteen-month period during which the Indian National movement has repeatedly invited the British Government to apply to India those principles of the independence of nations, the self-determination of peoples and democracy in government, which is its professed aim in peace and war.

Instead of the extension of democracy, we have witnessed in India the suspension of constitutional government, the promulgation of ordinances and the imprisonment of several thousand Indians, since the outbreak of war. Included amongst these are Trade Union and Labour leaders, ex-Ministers of Provincial Governments and other Congress workers. Parliament also amended the Indian Constitution, adding to the powers of the British authority in India.

The heavy sentence imposed on Nehru (who is treated as a common criminal) is apparently the British Government's answer to India's demand for freedom, and immediately arises from Mr. Gandhi's request to the Viceroy insisting on the right of free speech in India. Further imprisonments have followed and a large-scale conflict has already begun. The Indian people, led by Congress, are engaged in a struggle for freedom and democracy. What is the answer of the British people?

The India League is confident that there is a large volume of opinion in this country which is shocked by the British Government's policy in India and determined to declare their opposition to it and demand the immediate and unconditional release of Nehru.

We have, therefore, set up a CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE for the release of Nehru and in support of the Indian demand for freedom. The first step in this campaign is a public meeting at the Holborn Hall, London, on Saturday, November 23rd, at 2.15 p.m., which we hope will be well attended. The Campaign Committee invites your co-operation and requests all the many friends of Nehru and the cause of freedom and democracy to assist its efforts and to communicate to us.

The India League,
165 Strand,
London,
W.C.2.

REGINALD SORENSEN (M.P.),
Chairman.
V. K. KRISHNA MENON,
Honorary Secretary.

INDIA AND THE LABOUR PARTY

SIR,—I wish to support one and oppose the other of the two letters about India in your last issue. During my presidency, last March, when we had the advantage of Prof. Harold Laski addressing the Cambridge University Majlis, he made impressive promises to us about the Labour Party moving on India's behalf. He mentioned numerous occasions on which India was going to be made a first-class issue in the House of Commons, and went to the extent of saying that India might well ruffle the otherwise tranquil truce. Now, the truce has matured into a complete political wedlock. And the National Government, in which Labour's position is pivotal, has adopted as its clear policy the brutal terrorisation of the Indian people. What have the Labour leaders to say—in the context of their none-too-far pronouncements?

As for the second letter, Mr. Choudhary seems to be one of those who keep wistfully dwelling back on a vision of the past. He is by no means alone in this matter; there is an equally insignificant number of Hindus also who passionately desire a revival of Hindu Raj. Long before 1858, the

Moghul Empire was being done to smithereens by the militant Sikhs and Marahattas, who press their claims now in supersession of the Muslim one.

In effect, these atavistic ambitions are as futile as they are ridiculous. Nevertheless, these chronically sticky memories can do a lot of mischief. For instance, if the British people suddenly decide to surmount their ignorance about India and happen to have their eyes laid on such documents as Mr. Choudhary's letter in the attempt, they will doubtless acquire knowledge worse than their former ignorance. They may find the flimsy balloon of "the bi-national sub-continent of India" too alluring!

As to the diverting suggestion of Mr. Gandhi being made Viceroy of India, it should be apparent by now to the British public and to everyone that India wants Viceroys no more. There is no reason for Mr. Choudhary to take fear on this score. The present President of the Indian National Congress is a Muslim, and the first Premier of a free India might well be a Muslim again. The vast masses of India to-day, Hindu and Muslim and all—are solidly, inflexibly behind the Congress, and have the one flaming desire to free themselves completely.

Woodlands, G. P. CHOBISA
Windermere.

SIR,—Following the arrest of Pandit Nehru, Dr. Edward Thompson asks, "What policy has Labour for India?" And Mr. D. M. Anand wonders whether it reveals the true character of the British Labour Party. It is interesting to know what Pandit Nehru thinks of the question. He writes in his *An Autobiography*, 1936 edition, page 583:

> Why should we expect much from the British Labour Party? We have had two Labour Governments already, and we are not likely to forget their gifts to India. . . . At the Southport Labour Party Conference held in October, 1934, a resolution was submitted by Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon "expressing the conviction that it is imperative that the principle of self-government for India should be implemented forthwith." Mr. Arthur Henderson urged the withdrawal of the resolution and, very frankly, refused to give an undertaking on behalf of the Executive to carry out its policy of self-determination for India. . . . It is perfectly clear that in matters of imperial policy there is little to choose between Tory or Labour in England. It is true that the Labour rank and file is far more advanced, but it has little influence on its very conservative leadership.

Appleton, M. O.
Cheshire.

PALESTINE

SIR,—In an editorial on November 15th, headed "Lesson of Taranto," a leading evening newspaper urges that we "vastly increase the total of our skilled workers across the globe." It mentions India, Australia, Canada, etc., as training grounds. But it does not mention Palestine, a country where a vast reservoir of skilled labour already exists; is ready and waiting to be mobilised, but is continually and deliberately ignored.

Some 360,000 Jews in Palestine have been waiting since the first day of the war to be able to add their forces to the struggle against Nazism. They include pilots, mechanics, highly skilled technicians of every sort; chemical engineers, scientists, experts from the finest laboratories of Europe. Why have their services not been mobilised for the Middle East, where we are facing our most critical struggle, and are most seriously handicapped by deficiency of forces?

"It is dangerous to risk offending the Arabs by organising a Jewish force for Palestine," it is said. (The danger is hypothetical, actually, for up to now we have never had a chance to see what the Arabs in Palestine really would do if they weren't appeased.) But grant the danger. That means that a section of a population which is constantly reaffirming its loyalty to Great Britain, and desire to help in the war effort, is, by refusal to put aside local political issues, preventing Great Britain from availing herself of resources which might alter the whole face of the Mediterranean campaign. How long a prison term would Nehru get for an offence like that?

But apart from a Jewish army, Palestine is rich in war resources that could be mobilised without a political twinge. Ever since the war began, the press of Palestine has been urging the Government to organise and avail itself of these resources. Up to the time I left there, four months ago, not a single factory, industry, transport facility, or source of specialised labour, had been put on a war basis.

How long is it to remain untapped, this reservoir of (to quote the editorial) "skilled workers, the most precious possession which any nation can have in this war of machines"? ANITA ENGLE
1 Cold Harbour,
Amesbury, Wilts.

IRISH UNITY

SIR,—There seems to be a movement afoot to bully Eire into leasing naval bases to this country. It may be that, certain forms of friendly negotiation having failed, power politics provides the only means of obtaining what we so desperately need. I, for one, doubt this.

We recently traded naval bases for destroyers from America. This was friendly barter . . . but the U.S. got an excellent price and took the precaution of covering only a part of our still urgent need for warships, in order, no doubt, to drive a still better bargain over the next instalment.

De Valera, too, has his price. It is Irish Unity. Some consider this to be exorbitant. There is no doubt that Ireland must continue to have two national governments, having regard for the intensity of partisan feeling on both sides. It would, nevertheless, be highly advantageous to unite the two factions on common ground.

Both of these apparently conflicting *desiderata* can be attained by the historic and well-tried expedient of Federation. A Federal Irish Government elected by the *peoples*, not the Government, of North and South, could look after affairs common to both communities, such as foreign policy, defence and tariffs, leaving the national parliaments to attend to purely national affairs. With this type of Union we might hope to satisfy de Valera and to welcome his people into a closer and safer partnership with the British Commonwealth of Nations.

I would go further, and suggest that this nucleus Federation be extended to embrace the whole Commonwealth, thereby giving to both sections of Ireland a guarantee that neither would be dominated by the other or by England, and giving the Dominions due representation on the War Cabinet.

There may be certain personalities who themselves provide a stumbling block to Irish unity, such as Sir John Anderson and Lord Craigavon. If such is the case, they should be asked to prove their loyalty to the democratic cause by retiring from public life. HAROLD S. BIDMEAD
"Watchfield,"
56 Sutton Court Road,
London, W.4.

ARTISTS IN U.S.A.

SIR,—In his "Letter to a Colleague in America," Mr. Stephen Spender points out, with praiseworthy restraint and penetrating vision, how misplaced *in time* if not *in place* are those English writers and artists who have sought a peaceful environment for their invaluable work in America. He could not have given greater encouragement to us, who believe that European art and civilisation will emerge from the present inferno purified of much dross, freed of much feeble artificiality and in touch once more with the fundamental elements of humanity, from which all great art must spring. We believe that the artist who cuts himself off from the contemporary experience of the mass of humanity, however destructive to his immediate creative activity that experience may be, dooms himself to future sterility. For a young artist of Mr. Spender's distinction to agree, in other words, with this view gives us complete confidence that England will not lack creative writers worthy of our past after the war.

May I add some remarks from a letter which I received from a young sculptor as proof that our "colleagues in America" are wrong when they declare that European civilisation is "done for"? He is working as a hospital orderly in a Friends' Ambulance Unit and says: "I have made various attempts to get down to some work (sculpture) in my spare time, but find they soon fizzle out. It takes about a week to find the time, peace and energy even to write a letter nowadays, let alone do some drawing or modelling! But I feel that, in a way, all this may be doing me some good, as it provides a way of being forced to forget a lot of the more vicious faults cultivated in art schools, broadening one's general outlook and increasing one's desire and appreciation of a normal existence." Anyone who can say that after months of hospital drudgery—scrubbing floors, emptying dustbins and attending to the sick and even insane, etc.—should be a better sculptor after this war than before it.

With regard to our "colleagues in America," without abandoning Mr. Spender's wise restraint may I add a comment? Many of the writers of this group represented the extreme Left-wing of English literature in the 'thirties. Politics and social propaganda played a large part in their work. Preoccupied, quite naturally, with the social problems of our age, they were rather social reformers than pure artists. Referring to Mr. Spender's quotation from Stendhal, they fired volleys of pistol shots in the midst of the concert of art; and the more they introduced politics into their work the less were they true artists. Now the revolution which they so much desired has come, though perhaps its form does not quite meet their wishes. If they were, indeed, pure artists—those rare beings without whose vision humanity must perish—then one might be glad to think of them in peaceful sunshine, however much one feared their art might lose contact with its source in contemporary humanity. But as it is, the barricades seem to lack some of our most vociferous revolutionary leaders.

38 Portland Road, HUGH BARNES
Oxford.

DURING THE WAR

SIR,—Mr. Herbert Morrison suggests Regional Organisation for local authorities *after the war*. It seems to me there is an overwhelming case for this reform *during the war*.

We should be in a far less vulnerable position to-day if the great municipalities had been free 12 or 18 months ago to plan their whole scheme of civilian defence, including evacuation, in conjunction with adjacent county areas. In the provinces, as a result of our experience since the outbreak of war, we have no faith in organisation from Whitehall. But we are confronted with the hopeless task of devising protection for hundreds of thousands of civilians, who are "cooped up" within the ridiculous limits of our city boundaries. Well-to-do people, anticipating the probability of heavy provincial "Blitzes," have made private arrangements for evacuating themselves and their families into the country. There is no hope of anything being done for ordinary people, unless the local authorities are allowed to tackle the job.

The Ministry of Home Security is, no doubt, primarily concerned with the needs of London, but regional local authorities could easily work into their defence and evacuation schemes plans for jointly absorbing the surplus population of abnormal areas like London.

Bristol. R. ST. JOHN READE

WIRELESS NEWS BULLETINS

SIR,—One accepts as inevitable the now commonplace habit of announcers presenting the news in either a sneering or sarcastic tone as the situation demands. But the Editor responsible for such bulletins should at least check up on the subject matter. A recent inconsistency was the report of Friday night's raid on London. "Our A.A. defences forced the raiders to fly so high as to render their bombing of military objectives ineffective," but in almost the next breath, "As usual the Nazis again chose hospitals as their principal targets, five being hit during the night's raid . . ." (or words to that effect).

If it is a choice of truths or untruths, let us have either one or the other. SIDNEY L. BIRCH
13 Grosvenor Road,
Hounslow, Middx.

REFUGEE DOCTORS

SIR,—As one of the group of German refugee doctors whom you mentioned in your leading article last week, let me thank you for stating our cause in such admirable terms. Perhaps you will allow me to rectify two points.

Britain is not the only country which refuses foreign qualified doctors admission to medical practice, as this attitude is the same, or usually more narrow-minded, in all civilised countries. Not the whole course of study, as you seem to suggest, is required before foreign doctors can obtain the licence to practise in this country, but only one year in Scotland and two in England.

As to the second point, unfortunately it is not

true that all but one of the German doctors, who had their full training in this country, have been released from internment. I am in personal contact with two men in the Isle of Man, and I know of several others, in exactly the same position as the rest of our group, who are in Canada and Australia: in fact, I know of two only besides myself who have been released!

Since your last issue, the Ministry of Health has advised hospitals that Austrian, German and Italian doctors, nurses and other personnel may be employed again under certain conditions. Whether or not this will allow us to resume our work, will depend on the spirit in which these safeguards are employed; but I hope that your journal will not have to raise its voice on this part of the aliens problem again.

103 Gower Street, W.C.1. FELIX POST

PLANNED AGRICULTURE

SIR,—As a mixed farmer, I was most interested and encouraged by Sir George Stapledon's article in your issue of November 9th; interested in the scheme he outlines for the derelict acres, and encouraged that someone, who must surely have the ear of the Government, should so well realise the dangers as well as the benefits of the present ploughing policy.

I would like, however, to stress a point which he touches on, that of regional planning in agriculture.

I think it is not fully realised in Government circles that there are several districts in the British Isles which have, in practice, a planned agriculture. This planned agriculture is, in my opinion, being threatened by the Government's ploughing policy, greatly to the detriment in the near future of the whole country's fertility. I happen to farm in one of these districts, the Scottish Border country. Here the farms are divided roughly into three groups, all equally important and interdependent on each other: (i) the hill sheep farms pure and simple, producing the foundation Cheviot breeding stock; (ii) the semi-arable hill farms buying ewe lambs from the above and breeding half-bred ewe lambs for (iii) the mixed arable farms, which in their turn produce cross Down lambs for the store market. The considerable surplus of lambs from all these farms, together with the drafted ewes, are sold into the adjoining counties in England and Scotland.

It will easily be seen, therefore, that if one of these groups is too greatly upset it will react immediately on the other two and ultimately on a much wider area. This is, in fact, in process of taking place. The semi-arable hill farms are being made to shorten their grass leys from their usual 5 to 8 years to 2 to 3 years, and the mixed arable farms, whose usual leys are 3 to 4 years, are being made to farm on the old 4-course shift—a system from which they were extricated at the beginning of this century by Mr. Robert Elliot, of Clifton Park, Kelso, Sir George Stapledon's great forerunner in grass improvement. Through shortening the leys the stock-carrying capacity of both, in both sheep and cattle, is being drastically reduced, as will be their fertility from the same cause.

The Government is, therefore, sacrificing for a momentary gain of a few thousand bags of oats, one of the most important reservoirs of the most valuable breed of sheep for producing fertility in England, i.e., the cross Down lamb and the half-bred ewe. Already thousands of the latter have been slaughtered this autumn to make room for the plough; ewes which might have been breeding lambs to restore fertility next year on the poor broken-up grassland in England when it comes to be in green crop.

Apart from this, it is surely a pity to destroy the balance of a type of productive farming which has stood the test of the depression better than most others. Sir George Stapledon has always advocated long ley alternate husbandry; and here is a model which must more or less be followed, unless large tracts of land in England are to slip back into the ruinous state of neglect from which they are now attempting to struggle. H. SCOTT PLUMMER

Mainhouse Farm, Kelso.

VENEREAL DISEASE

SIR,—It so happened that when my copy of your current issue arrived, I was re-reading a number of articles published in your columns twenty-one years ago, in which the results obtained by Archdall Reid and others by the use of prophylactic methods were recorded by "Lens."

The letter from M.B., B.Ch. furnishes welcome confirmation of the claim put forward by "Lens."

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of prophylaxis in dealing with Venereal Disease, and the very large number of applications for information we receive from men serving in the Forces and civilians shows that this importance is now much more widely recognised.

IVOR C. LEWIS, Secretary

National Society for the Prevention of Venereal Disease,
49 Nassington Road, London, N.W.3.

SCHOOL PRIZE DAY

SIR,—In his review of Henry Newbolt's Selected Poems, Mr. Worsley sees fit to paint a revolting picture of a School Prize Day. My considerable experience of such days has fortunately differed *toto coelo* from his.

I have found no "gravy-odoured dining-hall," but a green amphitheatre in the woods: no flattery of "hated parents," but a genial company obviously enjoying themselves: "no schoolboys openly contemptuous of the prize winners' industry," but a cheerful mob spontaneously applauding their fellows in proportion to their popularity. "The school rake who is awarded a shield for devotion to duty" is, of course, a figment of a diseased imagination. The ill-mannered Headmaster, depicted by Mr. Worsley, bears no resemblance to those I have observed. Is he perhaps the type of Headmaster who might select Mr. Worsley as a colleague? Finally, the Governors; "three rows of decaying peers," etc. Well, well, it is easy to be offensive, and a jaundiced mind may mistake a malicious caricature for a brilliant and ironic picture.

Mr. Worsley may be a competent critic of the Public Schools: he would, however, be well advised to refrain from attempting sarcastic description, an art in which an ill-natured travesty is a poor substitute for approximate accuracy.

E. W. FORDHAM

(Chairman of Governors, Gresham's School)

NEWBOLT

SIR,—I will not join issue with your smart poetry reviewer on a matter of opinion. I would like to correct him on an error he made, no doubt unwittingly, of fact.

The selection of Newbolt's poems to which I wrote a preface was not mine. It was the work of the publishers and conditioned, I suspect, by copyright. I tried to point this out, as politely as I could, in the preface. But I now see that I was not clear enough. It is, however, a representative selection of Newbolt's nautical and school poems.

JOHN BETJEMAN

SIREEN

SIR,—"The housewife, the milkman, and the bus conductor" are right in their pronunciation of Sireen. They put the accent where the ancient Greeks put it, on the last syllable.

But how did they learn to pronounce it right? Words which have come down from ancient to modern Greek usually keep the old accent. Thus "Kalé Méra," Good Morning, has the old accents, but has lost the first, unaccented, letter of "Heméra," Day. Has the word Sireen persisted till the present day and been brought to the East London public by Greek sailors? When it came into use for a ship's horn they would know how to pronounce it right. J. D. MAYNARD

10 Wesley Hill,
Selly Oak,
Birmingham, 29.

MR. CHESTER BEATTY

Mr. Chester Beatty takes exception to a statement in our issue of November 16th that the N'kana Copper Mine in Northern Rhodesia "is owned by the Rhokana Company, one of the prosperous Chester Beatty groups." He states that the Rhokana Company is not in any way part of the Chester Beatty Group, and desires that this should be stated in our columns. As we have every desire to be strictly accurate, we willingly print his protest. But our statement was based on the facts that Mr. Chester Beatty is Chairman of the Mufulira Company, the Rhodesian Selection Trust and Roan Antelope; that the Rhokana Company holds one-third of the shares in the Mufulira and that the Rhodesian Selection Trust holds the other two-thirds. Sir Auckland Geddes is Chairman of the Rhokana Company and co-director with Mr. Chester Beatty of the Mufulira Company.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

A GREAT—above all a voluminous—writer's contemporaries enjoy one advantage over posterity which I have never seen remarked: they read his works in their entirety without strain, because these are gradually unfolded, at intervals, instead of being thrust upon them all at once, in twenty or more volumes of a collected edition. To read *all* Thackeray (or Meredith or Hardy) to-day requires the teeth of a circular saw and the stomach of an Alsatian dog; yet I for one have been able to read everything that D. H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley ever wrote—not to speak of Proust and Jules Romains—without the slightest sense of effort. The conscientious person who sighs heavily as he prepares to attack *The Ring and the Book*, may well think enviously of Lord Morley unpacking the four small volumes (they emerged two at a time, over a period of four months) of the first edition which he reviewed in 1869.

It is the same with George Eliot. With what excitement, with what a sense of spiritual enrichment about to be conferred on them, must that wonderful woman's devotees have opened the first parts of *Middlemarch*, in the year 1871! They had had nearly six years in which to digest the rather unsatisfactory *Felix Holt*, and nine in which to recover from the elaborate impact of *Romola*. Yet nothing but a sour sense of duty will induce most of us nowadays to attempt any of these three novels—chiefly, I think, because we have seen them so often staring at us Medusa-like from the uniform opacity of a Complete Works. Let us for once stare back, focus three volumes, and take them down.

The first thing that must strike anyone about *Middlemarch* is the immense seriousness of its tone. This has been said before, and I repeat it here in order to dispose of the reproach it implies. For if we are going to write off Dorothea Brooke as a solemn prig we shall miss the point of Mr. Casaubon, together with the fine balance and comprehensiveness of George Eliot's view of life. The moral concomitant of Christianity is stronger in this writer than in almost all the other great nineteenth-century novelists, including Dickens, but excluding Tolstoy, with whom George Eliot has many interesting points of resemblance other than the superficial one to be observed in the plots of *Adam Bede* and *Resurrection*. Dorothea and Mr. Casaubon (compare Karenin) are creations of which Tolstoy might well have been proud, not only for the rich overtones produced by their impact on one another, but because such characters are the most difficult of all to make vivid and sympathetic. This can only be done by employing the strictest fairness in delineation—a fairness attainable only by the most capaciously imaginative intellects. It is achieved, in this case, by a finely adjusted system of checks and balances, and by a canvas sufficiently large to allow the reader's attention to be attracted elsewhere for exactly appropriate lengths of time. Thus the much-abused Victorian method of sub-plots is seen to have, when properly employed, a distinct artistic use. In any case George Eliot's main problem must have been to keep us continually alive to the awful pathos of Edward Casaubon, while preserving a perfect verisimilitude; for he is one of those persons whose harsh music is ill-adapted to recording: increase the volume only a fraction and he would turn into a character out of Peacock, funny label and all. George Eliot never makes so gross a mistake. True, she allows a member of her chorus, Mrs. Cadwallader, to be witty at his expense, calling him "a great bladder for dried peas to rattle in" (of our authoress' pretty wit I have space only for this one example), but she herself has kinder words for him, as she has for everybody, the circumstances of her own life having taught her charity. (To live in "open sin" during the Victorian age was one of the best ways of discovering life.)

While Mr. Casaubon is definitely "down," Dorothea is permitted to come up and display the purity of her heart, her straightforward integrity. It is of her essence that she remains at the end of her trial what she was at the beginning, and her answer to Mr. Casaubon's proposal both sums her up and is a fine tribute to George Eliot's perceptive tact. Here are no raptures, no introspection—just eight lines of simple, dignified, exact statement of sentiment. That is all; true to her century, Dorothea put character before personality.

Yet when the desert-maker, Casaubon, is being given his due, the heroine is taken down a peg by a single brief remark. And it is one of this novel's characteristic subtleties that the remark is given, not to some clever person, but to Dorothea's feather-brained sister, Celia. "You always see what nobody else sees," she complains. "It is impossible to satisfy you; yet you never see what is quite plain"—*viz.*, that to an *ordinary* intelligence (which Dorothea's is not) Edward Casaubon is obviously self-absorbed, desiccated, pedantic, centreless and impotent, and that, in fine, it is stupid and obstinate to insist on marrying someone whom you cannot even help, since he is plainly an example of the Man Who Cannot Bear to be Wrong.

At this point a question imposes itself: what is George Eliot trying to do, in this novel of provincial life? Her theme, as I see it, concerns the problem of Fidelity—how it is that this concept, though the only sure basis for any human relationship, involves as much of a strain on the intelligence as on the heart, so that only those who continually integrate them both are capable of realising that it will pay in the end to go on enduring when endurance, together with everything else, has ceased to seem worth while. To this end George Eliot selects two couples—Dorothea and Mr. Casaubon, Rosamond Vincy and Lydgate—suitable for displaying between them all the data, and surrounds them with a brilliantly amusing and comprehensive chorus and a *deus ex machina*, Will Ladislaw, whose role it is to unpack Pandora's box amid the spurious tranquillity of a Midland town in the 1830's. (It may be remarked in passing that André Gide has charged this method of contrasted characters with being a "*mauvais procédé des romantiques*"; but a judgment that involves condemning *Middlemarch* and *Anna Karenina* in one breath can be little more than a piece of special pleading.) Will is a physically attractive artist in the Hawthorne tradition; he sets the chief persons rocking on their bases, but the latter remain in the last resort firm, because Fidelity—even when most irksome—is a magnet strong enough to keep all from toppling over. How much richer and more interesting, then, is the Dorothea-Casaubon-Ladislaw-Rosamond quadrangle than the equivalent treated by some smart twentieth-century novelist! Independence from the frame of Christian morals is apt to result in a poor and monotonous response, especially when the level of intelligence is not high enough to generate disinterested unselfishness. A stupid immoral Christian is a more interesting object than a stupid, amoral agnostic, and Rosamond, even at her worst, carries heavier guns than her great-grand-daughter. The Madame Bovary of English fiction, she is childishly heartless and selfish, but never uninteresting, because of the moral ballast that we feel clearly to lie somewhere in her nature, if only as a force that serves to make her failure, and her husband's, the more bitter. It is the tragedy of such natures to drag others down to their own level, and this aspect of the novel is finally summed up in one of those deftly worded generalisations in which the book abounds: "We are on a perilous margin when we begin to look passively at our future selves, and see our own figures led with dull consent into insipid misdoing and shabby achievement." It could scarcely be better said.

The chorus, which is a varied and important part of the scheme, has its own disruptive factors, and here the element of mystery, thought indispensable by readers of that time, is discreetly introduced. It is fairly clear that George Eliot was sensibly less interested in the Bulstrode-Ladislaw-Raffles imbroglio than in the other parts of her story, though not to the extent of treating it shoddily. Indeed the murder of Raffles can only be described as exquisitely plausible; it is as unobtrusive as the climax of Miss Compton-Burnett's *Women Without Men*—a murder by omission.

These people—the hard-boiled business men of *Middlemarch*—can hardly be said to deserve happiness, so that their fates, if ever so slightly artificial to the modern imagination, on the whole fall into place in the general scheme. Dorothea, on the other hand, did deserve to be happy. But life is notoriously unfair, as none knew better than George Eliot, and I am not at all sure about her final resolution of her heroine's discord. That happiness-ever-after with Will, achieved at the very last moment, strikes me as alleged, considering all that has preceded it. Long drawn-out complications, like simple absence, in the end make the strongest heart grow less fond. Hope does *not* continue to spring eternal, except in the silliest breasts, and one need not be a frivolous character to feel that resignation to second or third best which it is a part of life's obduracy to enforce. No: to the Dorotheas of this world virtue always remains its own reward.

Of course the novel has defects, of which that, I believe, is one. The modern reader will also observe a tendency (noted by Henry James) to proceed from the abstract to the concrete, a method before which, when it is at all strenuously pursued, credence inclines to withdraw; a few lapses of humour (*e.g.* to wear jewels in public cannot have been to sink as low as Dorothea imagined, even in early Victorian days); finally—and this is more grave—a certain absence of visual intensity throughout, due partly to lack of care for the *mot juste*. Flaubert achieved this most important quality because he proceeded on a more careful artistic principle, Balzac and Dickens by sheer slapdash dynamics. George Eliot herself achieved it in earlier days—in the *Mill on the Floss*, for example. But minds like hers tend, as they grow older, to become more analytical, less instinct with spontaneous creative vision; and it must not be forgotten that George Eliot was already thirty-seven when her first book appeared. Thus the images in *Middlemarch* are clever and exact, but not particularly vivid—as when she describes the problem of woman as "hardly less complicated than the revolutions of an irregular solid"—a most unfeminine simile which probably owes its origin to the influence of G. H. Lewes's scientific mind. The symbols, too, are very well selected, never obvious or too frequent: that vase, for instance, (we may be sure it was an ugly one), at which Rosamond always gazed in moments of embarrassment. But again they have not the immediate intensity and impact of Flaubert's; there is nothing of the kind in *Middlemarch* to compare with that miraculous passage which describes Madame Bovary, convalescent after her long illness, descrying the bonfires of grass on the distant hills. And herein, perhaps, lies the reason why her English counterpart, though a pathetic figure, cannot truly be described as a tragic one.

Andrew Marvell

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EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

HOME AND AWAY

Strangers and Brothers. By C. P. SNOW. *Faber.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Come Back to Erin. By SEAN O'FAOLAIN. *Cape.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Twilight in Delhi. By AHMED ALI. *Hogarth.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Across the Black Waters. By MULK RAJ ANAND. *Cape.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

It is commonly said nowadays that novel-writing is particularly difficult because the moral-political contours of our world are so provisional, so liable to swift and unpredictable change. With the general scene loose in outline, obscure in detail, threatened with erasure and redrafting, it is impossible for the novelist to sketch out a theme with any certainty that it won't be obsolete by the time he reaches his eighty thousandth word. This seems to be the favourite alibi of those novelists who are "resting" at present, and it strikes me as a shockingly bad one. The kind of writer who moves with the contemporary ebb and flow (D. H. Lawrence, for example) is of value precisely because his intuition precedes and indeed forecasts the certainties out of which a complete and consistent picture is made. The novelist of the hour, of the beating pulse, of the whole indiscriminate actual present, must be prophetic or he is nothing: nothing, that is to say, more than a reporter of incidentals, propped up maybe with hopes or fears or theories. For the others, it is the first moment of dawn—when day and night have completed their cycle—that gives the novelist his occasion. He is then the first man in effect to recall what happened, but what really happened, yesterday. Ideally he fulfils the paradox of being at once both a little out of date and also the first with the news. The dawn image fits neatly, for at the moment we see "yesterday" for the first time as something from which we have detached ourselves; and yet, in its nearness, the memory of it fills our imagination, we are still entangled in its consequences, our desires go on playing over it, we lack the distance to emasculate it.

For the prophetic novelist, then, a volatile and highly charged ambience; for the crystallising novelist a self-contained "yesterday," an epoch hesitating on a final chord; and for any other sort of novelist the standard size in waste paper baskets. In other words we now enjoy conditions, however foul for ordinary living, which are not at all unfriendly to novelists. The years of *l'entre deux guerres*, to borrow T. S. Eliot's phrase, are ready to be carved up and set before us. Dr. Snow for one proposes to do this, in four volumes of which *Strangers and Brothers* is the first. Dr. Snow's main group of characters is drawn from the young bourgeois "progressives" who gave the second decade of the period its characteristic tone. Very little of their conversation is recorded here, but one imagines them chatting cosily about Joyce and Marx, emancipating themselves on familiar lines, and aspiring to not contemptible ideals. Dominating them, as a kind of scoutmaster *en rebours*, is George Passant, a solicitor's clerk with a talent for collecting disciples. In the course of the story Dr. Snow reveals how Passant's virtues are transformed into vices; how his early indifference to money becomes an indifference to the way he acquires money, how his ideal of personal liberty degenerates into licence, and so on. His disciples fall with him, and eventually the principals of the group are charged with fraud. With their acquittal in most unsavoury circumstances, Dr. Snow—speaking in the person of defending counsel—offers an eloquent and sympathetic apologia for Passant and his generation.

That, I think, is a fair summary of *Strangers and Brothers*. It is an attractive theme, and Dr. Snow handles it with a keen sense of drama and a gift for occasional sharp observation. But the crux of the book is the characterisation of Passant; and more particularly, the precise definition of his magnitude. Dr. Snow is in no doubt. He all but labels Passant a "great man" and treats him throughout with acute respect. And yet the character presented to us is a pompous, humourless egoist, a small-town burlesque of Dr. Johnson, self-righteous, maudlin and bullying by turns. His one truly remarkable gift is a capacity for extreme self-deception. No sooner has he been acquitted of a fraud of which he is admittedly guilty than he resumes his stock heroics—

> This mustn't prevent me doing the essential things . . . I'm going to work for the things I believe in. I still believe that most people are good . . . I believe in goodness. I believe in my own intelligence and will . . . I don't deny that I've made mistakes. I gave too much opportunity for jealousy. It's natural they should be jealous, of course. . . . It's senseless letting your faith in goodness run away with you. . . . I shan't blame myself. It was bad luck, things went the way they did. It wasn't my fault.

And so on, *ad nauseam*, the all too familiar whine of the tinpot messiah, sodden with the tears of self-pity, infatuated with dreams of persecution. Granted it is human and pathetic; granted it is not foreign to you and me, *hypocrites lecteurs, semblables, frères;* but still it cries aloud, not for indulgence, but for a terrible and unsparing pity, the pity of Dostoevsky for Stavrogin, of Conrad for Lord Jim. To leave Passant untouched by irony, by satire, even by simple ridicule, is no kindness; at least it is the mistaken kindness of a sentimentalist. True pity is our acknowledgment of a sympathetic kinship with the *naked* man, the familiar mother's son, stripped of his error by the discipline of tragedy. In order to excite that pity the novelist, as Ford Madox Ford said, "must be pitiless."

I stress this, at the risk of doing less than justice to a piece of able story-telling, because many contemporary novelists are apt to be too indulgent to their heroes. The novel is not a camera. It has an additional dimension which is, for want of a better word, moral. No novelist ever says the last word about his characters, but he cannot escape making a moral equation out of them. And if he fails to make an adequate accusation when they are vulnerable, the reader merely does it for him instead and to his detriment.

In *Come Back to Erin* Sean O'Faolain shows the same uncertainty of touch which mars Dr. Snow's novel. Here we have an Irish rebel, Frankie, claiming the exclusive right to expound the *mystique* of Ireland. Whenever Frankie is about, no one else seems to "understand" Ireland: least of all his step-brother, St. John, who has made his fortune in the United States and returns late in his life to a dream of Erin which Frankie despises as a vulgar sentimentality. The opening scenes in Cork are beautifully drawn, and one accepts Frankie as a single-minded patriot of uncommon qualities. But then he goes to New York, tries with no great success to collect funds for "Ireland," drops a remark about gun-running and—to one's amazement—sinks into a sort of Hollywood romantic affair with St. John's wife, Bee. With no change of expression Mr. O'Faolain now proceeds to write an intense and eloquently agonised love duet in the vein of Hollywood's more earnest dramas—say, Garbo with Charles Boyer. Frankie, the simple, natural he-man, is "wildly passionate." Bee, the mature American wife almost to the point of caricature, enjoys taking him (oh, the big solemn boy!) to the Waldorf-Astoria for the usual light relief—

> He leaned his jaw on his fist and glared down the room. "It's all commercial," he said solemnly.
> "Darling," she gurgled. "I love you when you're disapproving and sweet."

And so we go on to the last huge scene in bed. "'Frankie, we *are* married?' And he had said: 'We are married.'" Whereupon, believe it or not, "she fell asleep like a"—like a (can you guess?)—"like a child"!

From there it's only a short step back to Erin where Frankie tells the girl-he-left-behind that she's the one he *really* loves. At least he thinks so. He isn't quite sure. Nor, I suspect, is Mr. O'Faolain, for he prudently rings down the curtain.

Now surely that situation is *funny?* It's comic, it's part of the human comedy. A man acting a flat contradiction of what he protests, and not perceiving it, is either comic or intolerable. Mr. O'Faolain, however, never bats an eyelid. In his devotion to Frankie's saturnine air of romantic tragedy he allows him to remain intolerable; and the result of this moral defection is that one is prepared to find the protagonists doing anything, for the good reason that they are adrift without even rudimentary characters. The book falls in fragments.

Let me add that some of the fragments are very attractive. Mr. O'Faolain at his best, notably in his short stories, has my unquestioned admiration; and there are many passages in *Come Back to Erin* which maintain his literary standard. There are lovely images ("as cosy as a hot coin in the pocket" and "Natalie woke with the smoothness of a rising diver"), the minor characters are richly drawn, there is a passionate eloquence at many points. But the back of the book is broken the moment Bee begins to lead Frankie (and Mr. O'Faolain) up the garden path.

Twilight in Delhi is a lyrical tableau of Indian life, heavy with ancient custom and a plaintive bitter-sweet poetry. Ahmed Ali traces the life of a family, the familiar course of marriage and birth and death; but here the people are subordinate to the city itself: except Bilqeece perhaps, a lovely portrait, grave and tranquil, so unobtrusive that one's attention returns to the pigeons, the flying kites, the endless songs and verses. There seems to be a poem for everything, ranging from—

> This damned disease of piles is so inconvenient:
> It shoots an arrow of death straight at the fundament,

to—

> I'm the light of no-one's eye,
> The rest of no-one's heart am I.
> That which can be of use to none—
> Just a handful of dust am I.

Across the Black Waters is a sequel to *The Village*. In his latest novel Mr. Anand follows the fortunes of Lalu, Lok Nath and the others in the war of 1914. The bewilderment of the Indian troops on their arrival in France is vividly drawn, and Mr. Anand fully retains the warm-hearted humour of *The Village*. A novel about *that* war may seem unseasonable; but Mr. Anand is dealing with a little known phase of it, and *Across the Black Waters* ought not to be overlooked.

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★ **TWILIGHT IN DELHI** by Ahmed Ali. (*7s. 6d.*). A first novel by an unusually gifted young Indian author. It has been praised by Bonamy Dobrée in *The Spectator*, by E. M. Forster who wrote: "It is beautifully written and very moving," and by J. D. Beresford who said in *The Manchester Guardian* that it was an "intense realisation of Indian life and of Delhi's place in the life of the nation . . . admirably written with a strong vein of poetry."

★ **NEW WRITING:** Autumn 1940. (*5s.*). The second number of *Folios of New Writing*, the wartime version of John Lehmann's well-known book periodical, with contributions from England, Wales, Ireland, America, India, New Zealand. There are two long original essays by Virginia Woolf and Stephen Spender, new stories by V. S. Pritchett, George Orwell, Jim Phelan, Willy Goldman, Julia Strachey, B. L. Coombes, new poems by C. Day Lewis, Rex Warner, and many other features of first-class interest.

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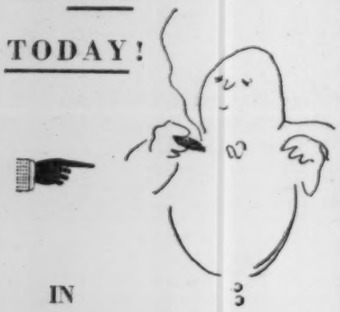

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The mere speed and scope of it is so terrific that it makes an effect by itself. The battery is hardly ever in the same place for more than two days at a time—towards the end hardly two hours. The German "success rockets" creeping closer and closer in a diminishing circle as their tanks advance: the roads choked with refugees: the endless straddling convoys of trucks and guns strung out mile after mile; the black bombers and the hedge-hopping Messerschmitts, the heat and the death-trap cross-roads: Dunkirk itself beneath its lowering flounces of smoke, in front a waste of wrecked machines and beyond it—the beaches. If only Gunbuster were a bit less of a gentleman; if only he hadn't been trained to believe that every whiff of criticism is disloyal; if only he had been able to see beyond his conventional one-eyed pattern of the phlegmatic Englishman; if only he had read Hemingway—or anything at all written since 1914—what an account he might have written!

As it is, prospective readers must be content to discount his attitudes and let their own imaginations play on his facts. In any case, they are strongly advised to start on page 85 and skip the first part, which deals with the *Sitzkrieg*. Life with the battery then seems as dated as a revival of *Chu Chin Chow*. Gunbuster, from internal evidence, is under thirty, a Territorial, brave, loyal and dependable. But the idiom of his mind belongs entirely to the last war. I found myself explaining a great deal that has happened by the fact that this mentality still exists. There is a subaltern called the Babe, schoolboy jokes, a lot of team spirit and a style decorated with Biblical inversions and derivatives of the kind which Kipling started and Ian Hay made popular. Only a stern sense of duty carried me through it; but the second part was worth the effort, even though one approached it mistrustful of the author's attitudes.

Basil Bartlett's scrappier and slighter diary is a relief, if only because he observes quite early on that "soldiering is hardly an adult occupation," and doubts whether "G.H.Q. is fighting the same war we are." Not that he is hypercritical or derogatory or, as Gunbuster might say, "disloyal." But he is alive and fresh and grown-up, where the other writer is still in the schoolroom. Besides, he has an eye for character, an ear for conversation, and a nose for incident; so that his account has the sort of lively vivacity of a good gossip column. As a Field Security Officer his main task was liaison with the French, and he has some shrewd comments on the difference between their methods and ours. His account starts just before the invasion, and from him one could have stood more of that phase. Once the thing begins, his experience is not dissimilar—the bewildered whirl of a mechanised retreat, when no one quite knows what's happening and contact between groups becomes impossible. His description of Dunkirk and the beaches is all the more effective for being understated; and even when he was taken off, his experience was not finished. The destroyer which rescued him was struck by two torpedoes as it left the harbour.

Reportage has been one of the most successfully exploited branches of writing in the last decade. It is to be hoped that someone experienced those four weeks who can really report them. It will have to be someone who isn't, like Gunbuster, terrified of his own feelings, and who combines the eye and the ear and the irony, which Basil Bartlett possesses, with a further layer of vision and a profound pity. But such a report may take a little time to mature.

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> I arrived in New Haven with my head full of Immanuel Kant, Dostoevski and the *Internationale*. The students I met were engrossed in sports, fraternities, and bars; there was only a little, grudging studying. . . . In the Caucasus the burning question had been "Is there a God?" and "What is the destiny of Russia?" In Russia I had seen students go wild in the theatre over Chekov's latest play; here, in the sacred precincts of Science and Art, I saw tremendous crowds go wild because a lot of grown-up men were running madly around a field kicking a ball. . . .

Two worlds: Mr. Culbertson has perpetually hovered between them. What stands out clearly from the flatness of the chapters dealing with his dizzy American bridge career, is that though he came to America when very young, he remained a Russian at heart. In Paris, in London, in Berlin after the war, one used to meet them, these White Russian *émigrés*, who seemed so much of one type, men with deep Russian voices, foreheads made tall by receding hair, adepts at "faultless evening dress," yet even when most at home in their adopted countries giving an impression of being alien, of living a shadow life, behind which they were intensely pre-occupied only with themselves. Joined to genius, such Russian self-preoccupation can produce a Dostoevski; when there is nothing behind it, an Ely Culbertson. I remember one such White Russian in Paris relating how occasionally, when suffering too badly from insomnia, he tried to achieve sleep by thinking mechanically of all the women who had shared his bed; by the time he had counted over a hundred, he said, he usually was asleep. Similarly Mr. Culbertson, desperately trying to find significance even in his most casual amorous episodes—simply because these had happened to himself:

> About eighteen years old, Faustina was one of the most beautiful girls I have ever seen in life or painting. Everything about her was soft, noble, apparently fragile, and yet strong as a Toledo blade that bends double but never breaks.

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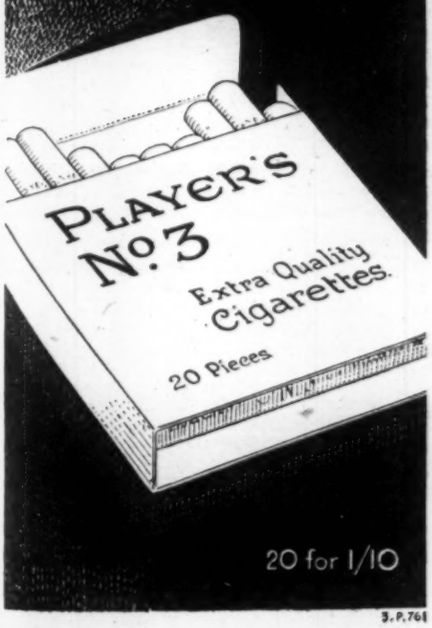

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★ MAKE IT A 'GIN AND BRIT' NEXT TIME

Oh dear! One can see Mr. Culbertson, a nervous Russian in America, an uprooted man who, when he turns inward, finds only emptiness, pacing up and down an American office room dictating reminiscences of his life to the secretary who, as he says at the end, worked twelve hours daily for a year on this "autobiography." He is at least candid, now that he he is older, about the shadows of depression closing in on his hectic life.

Socially interesting are the chapters telling how when setting out on his Bridge career he deliberately divided himself into two chief personalities, the "genius" and the "publicity manager"; how he rocketed into the lead in the great American Bridge world and turned Contract Bridge into an almost standardised "American industry." Was it accident that this great card-playing wave in Europe and America coincided with Hitler's rise and the relentless approach of war? Of course not. The immense card-playing phase just before the war represented the escapism of a capitalist world helpless before the spectres of unemployment, dislocation and war. Mr. Culbertson's pages bring back strange memories of the late 'thirties, of those millions of Bridge players, city dwellers anxious to kill thought, middle-class women compelled to kill time, a world of fatalistic impotence drifting towards the high-explosive bomb; a bad world, gone with the wind, never to return! *Gospodi Pomiloui!* May the Lord forgive us! T. R. FYVEL

A TOTALITARIAN CHURCH

The Puritans. By PERRY MILLER and T. H. JOHNSON. *Allen and Unwin.* 16*s.*

A study of Puritanism as planted and developed in the New England Colonies could not, even at this late date, be deemed superfluous; and when, as in the present case, it is linked throughout with documentary specimens of Puritan history, dogma, and ways of living, it may emerge as a miscellany of uncommon interest and variety. This is what Messrs. Miller and Johnson have achieved. They cover their period with the aid of extracts from all the earlier authorities, giving us the Puritans' theory of the State, their science, their conception of this world and the next, and they include a delightful anthology drawn from their memoirs and letters.

The Pilgrim Fathers, we are reminded in an excellent general introduction, were intensely patriotic, their leaders counting themselves loyal members of the Church of England. They were not detached from the main body of the nation. They carried to North America a strong academic tradition, and particularly an insistence upon the need of a learned ministry, for congregations which must, of course, be submissive. Their preachers were opposed to the great school of Anglican divines, but they were not less elaborate than those, while being far more rigid in their theology and metaphysics. They believed themselves to be devotees of the plain style, yet their sermons were tremendous structures and their latinisms often grotesque. The famous Increase Mather, for instance, denounces "gynecandrical dancing," while Nathaniel Ward was down upon "the nudiustertian fashion of the Court." They were always intolerant; for them any theory of toleration was monstrous. Certain modern historians have been wrong in hailing the Pilgrim Fathers as apostles of democratic freedom. They were resolute in building defences against the heresy of liberty and equality. Their totalitarianism was of a kind that we to-day can understand much more easily than the Victorians could, since it involved the complete identity of Church and State with government by a compact minority, which may at no time have exceeded one-fifth of the adult population. The franchise was limited to church members. Church attendance and a monetary contribution were compulsory, but the voluntary principle was ironically saved, for obviously no man could be made to join the church.

The Puritan mind, we are told, was one of the toughest ever known. It carried a grim fervour into everything. There could be no slackness in a governing minority which endured, or demanded, sermons of two and three hours. Family affection was not to be suppressed, but Samuel Sewall, known for his sensible objection to funeral sermons, cannot have been singular in his insensitiveness to bereavement. He came away from the funeral of his little daughter noting that it was "an awfull yet pleasing Treat." In 1686 a London bookseller named Dunton was in Boston, collecting debts. He went to the jail to see a condemned murderer. He found that the poor wretch had to suffer three long sermons in his last hours, the two Mathers and another preacher spreading themselves in word-pictures of the occasion and its significance.

When the authors come to the personal records of their period they have an abundance of material to work upon. It has been supposed that almost every literate Puritan kept a journal of some sort. A few of these were lively, but the diarists did not as a rule put down much about the daily life of their households. There was no lack of variety in their letters. Margaret Winthrop, wife of the first Governor, belonged to the elect company over which Dorothy Osborne will always preside, and her grave devotion was recorded in penmanship that was a marvel of perfection. Roger Williams, the courageous Radical of Rhode Island, courted in his own fashion a Mrs. Sadleir in the City of London. He worried her with controversial books, but could make no impression upon her resolute Anglicanism. "You have a face of brass" was one characteristic retort of hers. The excerpts here provided contain ample proof of the authors' claim on behalf of the Puritans that their best men were masters of prose. And their contrasts were amazing. Compare, for example, Cotton Mather's outrageous introduction to his *Magnalia*, here given in full, with the noble passage by William Bradford on the Pilgrims confronting their task at Plymouth in 1621. S. K. RATCLIFFE

COMMERCIAL TRAVEL

Coconut Quest. By J. S. PHILLIPS. *Jarrolds.* 16*s.*

Southward Ho! By WILLIAM LA VARRE. *Heinemann.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Why must specialists so often veil their competence under a touristic title? *Coconut Quest* sounds like a cruiser-tourist's diary, but is really the record of a journey commissioned by a soap firm, which had planted coconut palm plantations in the Solomon Islands to supply its Sydney mills with copra, to investigate the cause of an extraordinary nut-fall in these plantations and to find an antidote. This book is a fascinating account of the detective work undertaken by their specialist, which led him from the Solomon Islands to New Guinea, and thence through many of the islands of Indonesia. The entomological aspects of his journey make excellent reading, and so do the incidental human ones; for he is a very intelligent traveller, who chooses the two best ways of getting at the essentials in a new country—he makes friends with an intelligent native, and learns the language. There are some charming pictures of the native boys he took along with him, or who took him along. It is a pity that his bug-hunting did not justify a longer stay in Bali; it really takes more than three days to

get one's balance there, and Moerde showed him a little too much in the time. The descriptions of Timor, Flores and the Solomon Islands are much better, because less familiar, and that of Java, where he stayed much longer, is surprisingly good in spite of its scrappiness.

One hopes that administrators will particularly read the chapters "White Master" and "Black Boy" and the contrast, unfavourable to ourselves, which he draws between the results of Dutch rule in Java and ours in Polynesia and Melanesia. The great Sir Stamford Raffles, who during our short tenure of Java in the early nineteenth century laid the foundations on which the Dutch have built, is a national hero in Java but scarcely even a name to us, his compatriots. Mr. Phillips compares the Solomon islander, stunned by the impact of our civilisation, to a little boy knocked down by a bicycle. "They need our help, practical help. Not alms. Not doctrines. Not useless knowledge and uncomprehended legislation. All they need is to be shown how to lead a healthier and more secure existence." There are some interesting comments on Australia which he also crossed in his journey. What has happened since the war to the Cairns region, described by the author as the most beautiful and fertile part of Australia, "a veritable fairyland of crags and gorges, of lakes and mountain streams, of foaming cascades and sub-tropical bush which seems to have been handed over with uncalculating generosity as a home for gentlemen from southern Europe"? It appears that in some towns there were more Italians than Australians, who by forming syndicates were gradually getting control of the cane-land. These immigrants were not willing to be assimilated as Australians. "Many of them can only speak a few words of English and will not learn more, with the result that a number of 'Little Italys' are growing up in a British Dominion." One would much like to know whether the trouble foreseen by the author has materialised.

Southward Ho! also has a specialist side, and one of dangerous import for the still unrifled countries of South America, which the author describes with ardent admiration. For he is a prospector for treasure, for diamonds, emeralds and pirate gold, but also for the still more coveted oil, rubber, drugs, chicle, wool and minerals. The twenty-six chapters of his book describe different episodes of the adventurous journeys which have taken Mr. La Varre, a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, through the length and breadth of South America. Some extraordinary landscapes and some extraordinary personalities are described in this book. "The Jungle" is a terrifying chapter, and has a moral. There are some amusing episodes, too, as when one of the "greatest systematised agricultural operations" of the modern world was nearly upset by the author's desire for a ripe banana, during three days spent by him in a banana plantation on the Caribbean. "A wireless from Boston in the dead of night ordering 11,000 stems of bananas that wouldn't ripen for fifteen and a half days would have caused no flurry at all," but the demand for a ripe banana necessitated a special SOS to the coast, and a special courier bringing a stem of ripe bananas from the restaurant supplies of a passenger ship just arrived from New Orleans.

Good marks go to Mr. Phillips for the absence of his own portrait from his photographs, and a few bad ones to Mr. La Varre for a contrary reason, though his photos are otherwise remarkably good. But the joke is visibly against the lovely lady who cannot glamorise the llama, and no doubt also against the author in the boat among the Indian women of Las Blas.

BERYL DE ZOETE

The Problem of Pain. By C. S. LEWIS. The Christian Challenge Series. *Centenary Press.* 3s. 6d.

The elements of Christian revival in this country do seem now to manifest themselves in the English Church rather than in English members of the Roman. This book is a fair sample of the work produced. It is a dignified sensitive meditation upon a formal theme—the reconciliation of pain and, more generally, evil with a God of Love Who is also Omnipotent. This problem has reality only for two classes of persons—Christians tottering in their faith and agnostics tottering in their agnosticism. For other people, there are problems *connected with* pain. But the Christian answer is a brief one, and Mr. Lewis's time is spent otherwise than in direct statement. It is not difficult to imagine how the noisier Roman English would have transcribed certain passages. Both Mr. Lewis and they observe similar facts. One is the contemporary tendency to reduce all virtues to the virtue of kindliness. Mr. Lewis analyses the falsity and the evasion. Lunn or Knox or Jerrold rail at "humanitarianism" and "sentimentality" and march boldly along the road to Catholic Fascism.

Week-end Competitions

No. 563

Set by Roderick Random

The usual prizes are offered for a ballad on the theme of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Tom Jones, Busman's Honeymoon, The Trial* (Kafka), *Crime and Punishment, Eric or Little by Little* or *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (limit 32 lines).

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday,

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

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RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 561

Set by William Whitebait

Every year at examination time the newspapers provide a crop of "schoolboy howlers." Schoolboys, however, are not alone in giving themselves away idiotically, and you are invited to submit a set of three grown-up howlers. These should be if possible authentic, and should amuse as well as howl. When anecdotes are involved competitors are asked to be brief.

Report by William Whitebait

With a pre-war allowance of space it might be worth while to discuss the differences between a howler and a malapropism, the comparative claims of authenticity and amusement, and so on. Snobbery also plays an important part in a competition of this sort. But there have been so many quotable entries that I shall cut discussion and come to the capers, apologising (if need be) to any competitors who think that in awarding the prizes I have made wrong distinctions. First, then, a selection from the unsuccessful—those, that is, who succeeded with one or two but not all three of their stories—followed by two runners-up and the two prize-winners.

SELECTION

An airman who wished to be remustered as a medical orderly was asked "What would you do for rabies?" He replied "Rabies are Jewish priests. I would do nothing."

A countryman applying for a clerical job filled in the questionnaire asking for details of his surname, Christian name, hobbies, age, religion, and did it correctly, except that opposite "Sex" he wrote "British."

(Wing-Commander R. de la Bère)

Heard in an air-raid shelter: "It's awful to think you may be hurled into maternity any minute." ("Pibwob")

Extract from letter received at Public Assistance office:

"Please send my money at once. I need it badly. I have fallen into errors with my landlord." ("A. A. L.")

She sang that lovely "Goodbye," written by Tolstoi. (E. Aitken)

I was one day attending to a Cockney flower-seller who had just delivered a marvellous wreath to the house of a dead plutocrat. He was naturally overcome.

"Cost 'em thirty quid. Had to take it right through into the conservative. They'd layed 'im out there lovely, too. He was embossed, yer know." (T. J. Hunt)

I remember a dance-band player who thought that the marking, "legato," on his score was the cue for leaving his seat, and "hoofing."

(E. H. Beadwell)

The young "intellectual" (female): "Oh but *darling*, I do *think* Somerset Maugham is just *too* perfect. I mean, he *simply* hasn't any *contemporaries!*"

Another woman: After a quarrel with her young man, the lady retires to bed in dudgeon and says disgustedly: "Believe me, the more I see of men the more I love my bed." (N. Bodington)

Chairman of Education Committee to candidate for post: "I see that you have among your list of subjects studied Ancient History. You also state 'Archaeology.' Would you kindly explain to the Committee whether this is Ancient or Modern Archaeology." (Edith Hibbert)

He was the soul of chivalry. He always gave up his seat to a lady in a public convenience.

(Criss-Cross)

Minute written by a Government official on a question asked in the House by a M.P.:

"This man is always asking troublesome questions; he is the stormy petrol of politics."

Comment by another Civil Servant: "Hail! to thee blithe spirit, bird thou never wert."

("Petchandlie")

To me, a small girl returning home late from school: "At last! I've been keeping my Virgil at the window for nearly an hour." (Wet Nelly)

An aunt of mine who was staying in Paris and whose knowledge of the language was more literal than correct, hired a cab to go for a drive. She seated herself heavily and called out to the driver: "Oh, Cochon, le printemps est cassé!"

("Allison")

Telling how her granddaughter had been taken suddenly ill: "And she was that bad the nurse had to give her an anemone." ("Kong")

St. John's man, instructing a first-aid class: "There are two things a St. John's man must not do—he must never lift a lady's skirt, and he must *never* take money for it." ("Ming")

From a provincial newspaper: "The wedding was duly consummated in the vestry."

A film magnate, when one of his stars had apparently passed out after an immersion in the cause of art: "Artificial respiration? No *Sir*—let her have the real thing!"

(Miss G. Pitt)

We were talking of the Greeks and the Italians we had known and liked. Mrs. G . . . n looked up and remarked: "I saw an Albino yesterday. I cannot at the moment remember where their territory lies."

Polly had a weakness for foreign phrases, but had had little education. About a very superior lady she remarked one day: "She is so *very* hoi polloi."

(Flora Grierson)

The following story is quite true: There was an air raid one night somewhere in Sussex, and as several loud explosions had been heard it was decided by the family to bring Granny downstairs. The old lady, however, refused, saying: "It's all right dears, don't worry. I shall stay where I am, they are probably *our own bombs*."

This is also true: An elderly woman sat next to Kreisler at a dinner-party. "Oh Mr. Kreisler," she said, "we *are* so indebted to you, my husband and I have never had *any other make of car*."

(Mrs. M. D. Mander)

RUNNERS-UP

From a Civil Service Exam. Paper:

Q. If you found a man bleeding freely from the head, what would you do?

A. Apply a tourniquet to his neck.

The Coroner's Court:

Returning the verdict, Coroner Brighouse said: "I have no doubt that the woman met with her death accidentally through falling from the window. I wish more people would open their windows each morning: it is a most healthy thing to do."—*Manchester Evening Chronicle.*

Official:

Extract from an evacuation notice: "All expectant mothers must show their pink forms."

(E. Voce)

My stepmother: "She made me look such a fool, you know, and there was no need for that."

"I always think that where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be otherwise."

"Just an SOS to let you know we are all well."

(Marion Barfield)

FIRST PRIZE

Lady (wishing to keep a few hens as her contribution to the war effort): "You know, I can't help thinking we ought to have a cock. Of course, I know it isn't *necessary*, but if we don't have a cock I can't believe the eggs will be so *nourishing*. After all, there won't be any *chicken* in them, will there?"

London Secondary School teacher, looking at a statue of Apollo naked and holding a lyre, and covering her embarrassment with rapid conversation: "Now let me see, which of the Muses was Apollo?"

A young lady, recently come from a finishing school to do war work, and billeted among cultured people whom she wished to impress, began to air her knowledge of the mistresses of Louis XIV. "Wasn't one of them," she asked, "called Madame de Maupassant?" ("Samson")

SECOND PRIZE

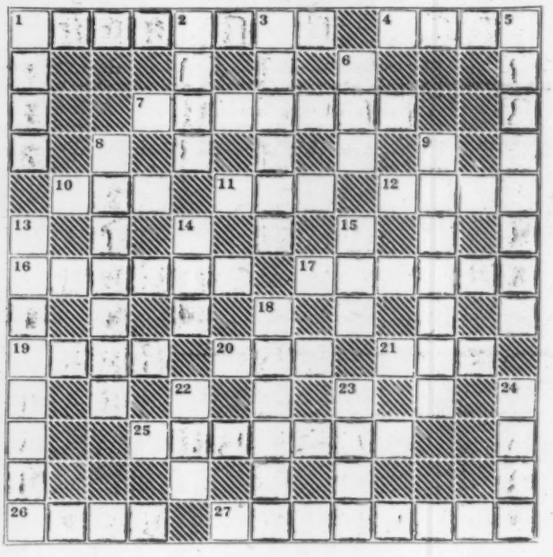
My grandmother, who rarely sees the *Evening Standard*, coming across one of Low's cartoons, asked, "Who is this gentleman in a bath-towel, my dear?" I replied, "Oh! that's Colonel Blimp." "Oh! yes, of course," she said. "Isn't he the man who runs the Russian Ballet?"

She had applied to join the Women's Land Army. On being interviewed it transpired that she was terrified of cows, but despite this was most anxious to learn to milk. "I'm sure I should be all right," she said, "if only I could start on a calf!"

Her house was crammed full of evacuees. The last straw came when the favourite nephew, home on leave, telegraphed, "Arriving to-night. Don't worry, bringing LiLo." "Oh! dear," she exclaimed, "Where can I put them? John and his girls will be the death of me!" ("Bargee")

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 8

Set by V. S.



The last week's winner is:

Mrs. K. M. Swetenham, 9 Eversley Park, Chester.

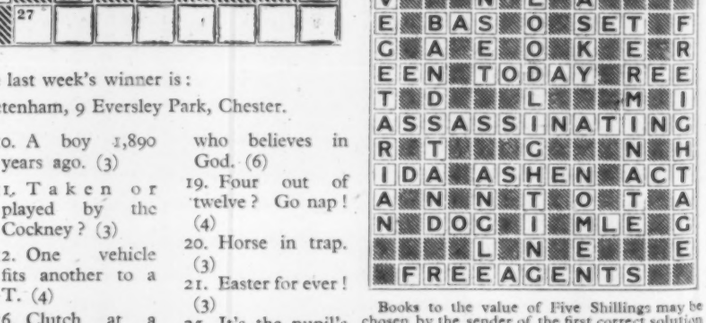
ACROSS

1. Gives a cachet to the family to appear in furs. (8)
4. Runs up trousers by the thousand on the briny. (4)
7. How this relative catches a bus? (4 hyphen 3)
10. A boy 1,890 years ago. (3)
11. Taken or played by the Cockney? (3)
12. One vehicle fits another to a T. (4)
16. Clutch at a fool's heart for all he's worth. (6)
17. The one saint who believes in God. (6)
19. Four out of twelve? Go nap! (4)
20. Horse in trap. (3)
21. Easter for ever! (3)
25. It's the pupil's place to take the golf pro's advice. (3 hyphen 4)
26. The signaller's girl gets the pip after lunch. (4)
27. Sailor boy, aunt has left you out—how absurd. (8)

DOWN

1. Sharp? So you are. (4)
2. Place it in the south-east. (4)
3. I'm where I land. (6)
5. The Gallery Girl seems to set forth in error. (8)
6. He could write poetry when he had a try. (3)
8. The turtle's turn for a hat-fitting (7)
9. Downing Street furniture. (7)
13. Plant the man in front of your father, duckie. (8)
14. Eyesore. (3)
15. A modest fling. (3)
18. (rev.) Swig? (6)
22. Always puts in a word for you. (3)
23. Toto is half-Italian judging by his voice. (4)
24. A break in the lease? (4)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

HEALTHY MARKET REACTION — THE OUTLOOK FOR RAILWAY STOCKS.

THE recovery in equity shares was checked this week by Mr. A. Hitler (I give him the correct title as we are now cultivating Russia) and by Mr. Oliver Lyttelton (why call him Captain if he is not in the army?). The market last week had assumed too quickly that we had won air superiority and that the war was going to be a short one. It is obvious that we have not won air superiority in offence and even from a defensive point of view Coventry revealed our weakness at night. There will be ups and downs in the air fighting and I beseech investors not to be carried away by their enthusiasm when we have a victory. The more sober reflections this week which were responsible for the reaction in equity shares were more than justified. Mr. Oliver Lyttelton added his quota of cold water in a broadcast speech in which he warned consumers that more restrictions were coming and that shop-keepers were in for a bad time. The market thereupon woke up to the fact that Woolworths had been advancing too fast and the shares fell sharply from 60*s.* 6*d.* to 58*s.* 9*d.* I still regard them as dear to yield only 5½ per cent. on last year's dividends of 65 per cent. Woolworths have not yet suffered the interruptions to their trade which seem to be "in store." The Bank of England analysis of retail sales revealed the fact that in September sales in Central and West-End London were down by 20.7 per cent. and in the South of England by 9 per cent. The bombing of provincial towns is only just beginning, and a decline in retail trade throughout the country must be expected. But Woolworths are only symptomatic of the prevailing over-valuation of certain industrial and commercial ordinary shares. Two per cent. over the yield offered by 2½ per cent. Consols is not sufficient compensation, in my opinion, for the risks of a further increase in wartime controls, taxation and bombing.

* * *

The Minister of Transport made a spirited defence of the railway agreement in the House of Commons last week but excused his inaction on the grounds that it was a better agreement than that of the last war (which I admit) and that it was difficult to find anything better short of "the very drastic application of nationalisation." There are many other industries which will be nationalised after the war and perhaps we can wait a little longer for the railways while the principles of nationalisation are being worked out. Under the present agreement the Government guarantees the railway pool £40 millions, which is based upon the average net revenues of the main line railway companies for 1935, 1936 and 1937 and the London Transport Board's net revenue for the year ending June, 1939. If there is any surplus over the guaranteed minimum the railways are allowed to keep the first £3½ millions and thereafter share equally with the Government up to their standard revenues (£56 millions). Personally I think the agreement would be bettered by the simple provision that the Government should take the entire surplus, instead of half, after the £43½ millions. On the question of favouritism to the railways I must admit that excess profits tax is not a material point immediately, yet I gather that the amount of profits subject to E.P.T. will be a matter of great argument between the railway companies and the Treasury.

* * *

The conclusion which should be drawn by the investor is that the junior railway stocks assured of their dividend under the Government's minimum guarantee are a good wartime speculation. The debenture stocks on the other hand seem to be dear enough.

	Price	Yield %
Great Western 4% debenture	107	£3 15 6
Southern 4% debenture ..	102½	£3 18 0
L.M.S. 4% debenture ..	100½	£4 0 9
L.N.E.R. 3% debenture ..	71½	£4 4 3

It is not generally appreciated that railway debenture stocks are not like other debenture stocks. If a railway goes into receivership the receiver cannot sell any of its fixed assets to meet the debenture interest charge, as he can in an ordinary industrial concern. The railway receiver can only account for revenues and apportion them in priority to the creditors. As compared with these debentures the guaranteed stocks which have cumulative dividends are more attractive; for example, London North Eastern 4 per cent. at 75½ to yield £5 7*s.*, but the junior preference stocks, which are covered as to dividends by the Government's guarantee, are really the prime speculative investments in the market. For example—

		Yield %	Over-all cover for dividends
L.M.S. 4% Preference ...	51½	£7 15 3	1.24
L.M.S. 4% (1923) Pref. ...	37½	£10 13 3	1.09
L.N.E.R. 4% Pref.... ...	35	£11 18 3	1.10
Southern 5% Prefd. Ord....	46	£10 17 6	1.10

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DEC 31 1940

The Week-end Review

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IF YOU WERE HITLER?

THIS question is not the beginning of a parlour game. Hitler plans ahead, and unless we anticipate his plans we may be caught again. He looks back on twelve months of brilliant successes, achieved according to plan, followed by a period in which his plans went all wrong. He mopped up Europe in the spring and early summer because he had made precisely the right preparations during the winter for his spring offensive. Things only went wrong for him when the British Army was not captured at Dunkirk and his invasion was prevented by the R.A.F. Now, after indiscriminate bombing which has not destroyed the morale or the communications or organisation of London, he is directing his air attacks on centres of production and has greatly intensified his attacks on our shipping. Meanwhile, he has proclaimed a new order for Europe under German domination, and summoned as his vassals the rulers of one small country after another. His Balkan plans are still obscure; Russian aid in supplies and political co-operation is still an ambiguous quantity, and he watches the discomfiture of his junior partner Mussolini probably with mixed emotions.

Hitler also has troubles at which we can guess, but which we cannot measure. There is some sabotage in his factories; grumbling resentment in Norway, Holland, Belgium and, above all, in France; the Spanish problem is not altogether easy for him; British bombers are hampering his production and forcing the transference of factories to Eastern Europe. Above all, his plans must be based on the fear of the increasing American help to Britain.

What, then, would you do if you were Hitler? In the coming three months you would put forward propaganda about the New European Order and rely on Britain refusing to state war aims of any sort. You would continue to bomb Britain and you would intensify your raiding, bombing and submarine attacks on British shipping. Above all, you would hope that Britain would behave again during this winter as France and Britain behaved during last winter. You would save your bombers and prepare for a greatly intensified blockade in the spring. Your real plans would not appear until, after a winter of intensified effort, you were ready for an attack on Britain, as crushing as that which destroyed France.

And what should Britain's reply be? First, clearly if possible to knock Mussolini out of the war and intensify wherever possible discontent and revolutionary feeling on the Continent. The defeat of Italy would mean a point of attack against Germany and a diversion of her effort; even more important it would mean the release of the Navy to defend Britain against the growing danger of blockade. But a programme of European revolution involves a new coherence and determination in our foreign policy and propaganda, as Mr. Duff Cooper seemed to realise in his speech on Wednesday. But even Mr. Duff Cooper did not appear to realise that without a clear definition of war aims such propaganda is impossible in countries which, dominated by Hitler, will only be encouraged to resistance if they see a hopeful alternative. Without war aims, propaganda in Germany is impossible. Secondly, we need a far more intensive and organised plan of national production. Mr. Churchill, an inspired commander-in-chief, has not succeeded in organising the kind of Cabinet that wins a war. In the last war the victorious Cabinet consisted of a few exceptionally able men without departmental duties. The present Cabinet contains some men of no special ability, some whose ideas are irrelevant when it comes to meeting the Nazis, and some who are departmental leaders as well as members of the War Cabinet. The mixture is an unhappy compromise. We still have no co-ordinated scheme of supply of materials and labour; we still have three-quarters of a million unemployed; we still hover between the State control that is necessary for the war (or for peace, too, for that matter) and an out-of-date system of private enterprise. It is not yet clear whether we have any coherent shipping and agricultural policy. If consumption is to be cut down, then we need more rationing; if farmers are not to expect overseas fodder for their live stock, then they will need a longer period of guaranteed prices after the war is over than is at present offered them. In short, we are still inclined to talk of an indefinitely long war, stretching into 1944 or 1945, which we shall win, thanks to our traditional "staying power." That is a fatal attitude: what we have first to do is to win next year's campaign, on the farm, on the high seas, in the air and in the hearts of all the peoples of Europe.